FLEETING SHADOWS

ELDER WILLIAM THOMAS

A STORY OF AN AMERICAN WELSH FAMILY OF BUCKS CO., PENNSYLVANIA AND POINTS WEST:
OHIO, NEBRASKA, KANSAS, TEXAS, NEW MEXICO

1710 - 1861

by

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THE THOMAS FAMILY OF BUCKS CO., PENNSYLVANIA AND POINTS WEST:

Ohio, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas. New Mexico

1710 - 1861

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INTRODUCTION

The dependable family historian should be able to document as well as listen to family lore. In compiling family chronicles it frequently is necessary to substantiate our own folks' fireside tales, weaving their fragile threads spun at kindred hearths thru the warp and woof of historical evidence — wherever that may lead! And this we propose to do in the following pages.

This family story, occurring in the Southwest in 1861, is about a family member being slain in an Apache massacre — by Cochise, no less! In Southwest history it is known as "The Freeman Thomas Massacre". This chapter is as much about finding the story as well as the telling of it.

HOW I GOT STARTED ON THIS STORY

Freeman^5 Thomas was a younger brother of my mother's great-grandmother, Elizabeth Thomas Gillet, who lived as a farmer's wife in Coffey Co., Ks — 6 miles from my mother's childhood farm home. While ancestor Elizabeth died a couple years before Mother's birth, stories were passed down to family members, some of whom reside in the vicinity to this day.

Great-grandmother Elizabeth^5 Thomas (1824-1901) was born in Ohio as were all of her 6 known siblings — she in Butler Co., and her brother Freeman in Knox Co. 8 years later. Their father was Morgan^4 Thomas, a Pa. soldier of the War of 1812, who emigrated in the Westward Movement across the state to exercise his craft as cabinet maker. Of Welsh ancestors come to Pa. in 1710, Morgan finally set down in Dela. Co., Ohio where his daughter met a young farmer — Homer^7 Gillet, the grandson of Joseph^7 Gillet of the American Revolution — whom she married the last day of 1845; their issue numbered 5 sons and 1 daughter. Elizabeth and Homer Gillet named their second son "Freeman Zachary", probably for her brother Freeman who then was a boy of 16 still at home, and unknown to the couple in 1848 was destined to be massacred 13 years later along with 6 other young men by Chiracahua Apaches on the Butterfield Stage Mail Route in Cooke's Canyon, 70 miles west of El Paso, Texas.

I first learned the nucleus of this Freeman Thomas tragedy from my mother's first cousin — Thelma Swibold Hegwald (1914-19__) in San Marcos, Calif. in 1985, after most of our Gillets had passed on. Recently retired, I had set myself to genealogy research, and had driven from Denver to Calif. to learn more about the Gillet clan as she was likely the last of the clan with much knowledge of family history, having been reared from infancy by her grandparents Freeman Z. and Emma Gillet (also my mother's grandparents). They lived on a small farm in Coffey Co., Ks. — 5 miles west of Gridley.

I remember them well enough, as well as Cousin "Little Thelma", as the family called her. My mother, 11 years older than her Cousin Thelma, grew up on the same "Burlington road" one mile further west. In 1922 Mother left Burlington High School to find work in Greenwood, one county west, and married a grocer's son, Leonard Dodd — my father.

Some summers during the Great Depression when we could afford the 45 mile R.R. trip, Mother boarded the "Doodle Bug" of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe with her 2 daughters to take us to visit the "old home folks" near Gridley. My first recollection of Freeman Z. and Emma, her grandparents, was 1928 — her aged grandpa sitting in a broken sun-faded rocker in a weed choked yard quietly admiring the last of his ancient fruit trees for he dearly loved fresh fruit. Aged Grandma Emma in the tiny house fried chicken peppered so heavily I refused to eat it, believing it to be covered with dirt. When kin dining at the table laughed heartily at my childish ignorance I was so embarrassed I tumbled from a bench and slipped under the table to remain there in humiliation until rescued by one of the adults. I was five years old at the time.

Grandma Emma died in 1932, and Grandpa Freeman Z. was summoned by the death angel the next year at age 85.

After their passing, Cousin Thelma married John Hegwald, a German youth. Their rural Ks. community was sharply divided for a couple of generations over ethnic origins — English vs. German. "English" meant English-speaking as a first language by anybody not of German descent. The Gillets, of course, were of the English connection — literally — originating in

Stuart England in the 17th Century. Freeman Z. was a 7th generation descendant of New England Puritans. The Hegwalds on the other hand and other Dutch-y neighbors had fled Germany recently enough to be persecuted — even to serving jail time during WWI — for speaking German — they having been subjects of some villified Kaiser, and who knew might still be loyal to him. The newer Germans in the community, not incidentally, were the better farmers for their larger families were known workaholics.

So Cousin Thelma and John found it prudent to move to Calif. to rear the Hegwald children. Anyway WWII was raging and Calif. offered more war work than Ks. to earn the wherewithal to feed their numerous brood.

The 2 days I spent with Cousin Thelma in San Marcos proved to be the springboard for several stories in my Gillet family narrative. In one conversation, she mentioned that the brother of her great-grandmother Elizabeth Thomas Gillet of Gridley had been a Butterfield stage coach driver and was slain by Indians while on the San Antonio run to Ariz. Terr. at Cottonwood Pass, along with 6 of his guards; his name was Freeman Thomas. And that's all she knew about that! Nothing at all about the dates, the Indian tribe responsible, the name of her Great-uncle Freeman's companions, or even the circumstances of the tragedy.

But she did know the names and spouses of her great-grandmother Elizabeth's other siblings — that 2 of them-Thompson and Frank Thomas — had settled near Nebraska City, Nebr. Terr., only to witness a fatal Indian attack on a wagon train 50 yards from their own prairie ranch wherein 24 freighters were killed. She was told that Thompson and Frank were stage drivers and that Frank quit Nebr. to travel with the Van Amburgh show for 18 years.

Well, this was something to research, so I returned to Denver to follow these threads by hook, crook, or book. It took more leg work and document searching than I had imagined!

I began with my copy of kinswoman Wilma Gillet Thomas' book The Joseph Gillet Family of Connecticut, Ohio, and Kansas, copyright 1970; Adams Press, Chicago. From its inserted addendum I quickly learned a little

about the Thomas branch of our family — namely, that cabinet maker Morgan[4] Thomas (William[3], William[2],William[1]) was born in Pa., ca. 1781, and served as private in the War of 1812 with the Bucks Co. Rangers; that he married Mary A. before 1804 and moved to Ohio — living in Butler Co. in 1820, in Knox Co. in 1830, in Delaware Co. in 1840. He died at this latter place before 1850.

In 1970 when she published the book, Wilma believed no record had been found of Morgan's children, except for knowing the names of 3 sons —William, Freeman, Franklin, and 2 daughters — Mary and Elizabeth (the latter being married in 1845 to Homer[7] Gillet of Ohio — our common ancestor). The conversation I had with younger Cousin Thelma in Calif. confirmed these names and produced 2 more — Thompson and Rachel together with the names of the spouses of them all.

But finding evidence to my satisfaction that their father Morgan[4] Thomas was truly of the line of William[3], William[2], William[1] Thomas, a well documented lineage of Bucks Co. Pa, would take years on my part to prove.

In this brief addendum, family historian Wilma made a few remarks about the Thomas progenitor, William[1] born at Llanwenarth, Monmouthshire, Wales in 1678. In 1712 he arrived in Phila. destitute as all his possessions had been sold by a dishonest shipmaster. Obliged to work 6 years as a cedar cooper in Pa., William[1] was finally able to buy 440A in Bucks Co., and continued to accumulate land parcels around his estate until his death in 1759. He bequeathed to each of his 7 children large farms and a rich heritage with the Baptist Church where he was assistant pastor to Rev. Benjamin Griffith.

Fortunately Wilma in her work cited 3 references: (1. The Thomas Family Genealogy of Hilltown, Bucks Co., Pa. by Edward Matthews, 1884. (2. The 1831 handwritten "Journal of Reverend Joseph Mathias of Bucks Co.,,Pa." (3. Probate Court Case #208, Dela. Co., Ohio. I quickly noted that Matthews' 1884 book gave no evidence that Morgan Thomas was the great-grandson of William[1] of Wales as Wilma claimed. In due time I consulted all 3 references. And many more.

In the Gillet book Wilma also recorded that William[2] Thomas, born ca. 1723 in Bucks Co., died here ca. 1768; his marriage to Abigail Day was ca. 1747. Their son William[3] (1748-1819) was born and died in Bucks Co.; he was married to Mary Morgan in 1774. But missing was proof of the Morgan[4] Thomas connection, and, of course, any reference to Calif. Cousin Thelma's brief account of stage driver Freeman Thomas' death by Indian ambush on the last of his Butterfield runs — as she learned it from her own grandparents on the Ks. farm in the 1930's.

Now that I had the skeletal family record I sought more information to flesh out the valley of bare bones and bring them to life. The quest was on!

In the following years I consulted the federal census and cemetery records, histories of counties and cities, and of the Butterfield and other western Stage Lines prior to the 1882 completion of the Southern Pacific R.R. in the American Southwest. I found the autobiography of El Paso pioneer, W.W. Mills, and a Masters' thesis on the "Freeman Thomas Massacre" in the New Mex. State Archives in Santa Fe. In a family envelope I discovered some yellowed brittle obits from 1900 that fragmented with handling belonging to my own grandmother Maggie who tossed nothing away except twice-used dishwater in the days of severe Ks. droughts.

The story emerged slowly, like a Brownie Camera snap shot in the developing darkroom.

This account by my own hand is a chapter of our family history.

PART I

THE THOMAS FAMILY OF BUCKS CO., PENNSYLVANIA 1710-1814

. . . .

The Elder William[1] Thomas Family of Pa.

Our progenitor William[1] Thomas (1678-1759) was born at Lanwenarth, Monmouth, a shire adjacent to the English border. Now a British maritime county, it was then considered a Welsh County, although Henry VIII, earlier abolishing petty governments, had divided Wales into 12 counties and decreed Monmouth an English shire. Here Roman soldiers once marched

over its hills, Druids built altars and circles, Benedictines erected monasteries and parish churches, Normans stormed its castles but William the Conqueror never conquered the Welsh princes. Fields of oats and barley grew on its hilly land, sheep grazed verdant meadows, gardens produced peas and turnips.

In general manor estates were large. But the Thomas family's holdings were more modest. Some distance from his birthplace, our William's parents later located on a farm called *Blassaw of Wyn in Bedwlldy* Parish. As freeholders of valuable property, they were able to give William a fair education. Reared Baptist by them, the young man began preaching and exhorting (speech intended to strongly urge seekers to accept the faith) in religious meetings but was never ordained like his pastor Rev. Abel Morgan. At age 32 he married Ann Griffith, a woman 2 years his junior. Their first child, Thomas[2] Thomas, was born 1711 in Wales; their other six would be born in William Penn's colony in America.

The impetus for the move was religious dissension in Great Britain. While Henry VIII had separated his reign from Papal authority, his successors vacillated between Catholicism and Protestantism. Although our William's childhood reigning King Charles II (1660-1685) was without deep religious conviction, he nevertheless received the last rites of the Catholic Church on his deathbed. His successor James II's efforts to re-impose his Catholic religion in the Church of England finally ended in religious toleration of a sort. These struggles caused some British to turn to its colonies in the New World. William[1] Thomas was one of these to leave Great Britain. And Pa. was the colony to welcome Welsh Baptists as the Quakers, unlike New England Puritans, held considerable tolerance for those of different religious views. Baptists had attempted to settle in the Mass. Bay Colony but were banned by the Puritan constable nailing shut their Welsh Baptist church doors.

Penn's earliest colonists, of course, were English and Welsh Quakers. A 17th century English colony, Pa., was founded as a haven for the Religious Society of Friends, or "Quakers" derisively so-called for they literally trembled before God but at the same time demonstrated great fearlessness in the

presence of humankind, including Kings. Well known to readers of history is the story of William Penn, (1644-1718) scion of a wealthy naval family in England who disgraced his Admiral father by joining the despised Religious Society of Friends while a student at Oxford. Ultimately, his Penn's Woods in the New World would provide a wilderness refuge for this Protestant sect persecuted in England for defiantly embracing a democratic egalitarianism more than custom or law allowed, to the point of even resisting the Crown.

This sect, not noted for silent meekness then, was founded by George Fox in the latter 1600's. It built no churches (only meeting houses), had no singing or clergy, believed an Inner Light from God illuminated their consciences, treated their women as equals, and persistently for generations addressed all persons — prince, pauper and priest — as "thee and thou", words indicating no rank as Your Highness, Lord, or even Mister. Males never deferred to kings by doffing the stiff black hat as protocol dictated. Its members would not fight England's wars, take oaths in court, and often defied the State Church by disgracefully disturbing its divine services. They were whipped, of course, and thrown into the gaol. Silence in the public meeting house was their form of worship, that is, until the Spirit moved — if He did — on someone of either gender to speak. Quakers went further than the more familiar Puritan in protesting. They not only wanted to abolish Anglican liturgies and vestments but also the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper held as ordinances by most Protestants.

George Fox came to Puritan New England seeking asylum for his dissenters. As British colonists a few came only to receive worse treatment here than the Crown had meted out in England. Fox himself could not secure a royal grant to establish a new colony in America, but William Penn, son of a prominent Admiral of the Royal Navy, could. The younger Penn, himself a Quaker preacher of no mean skill, received a grant from Charles II in 1682, and he led Quakers the following year in the Welcome to America in what he called a "Holy Experiment". Making peace with the Delaware Indians by offering 150 fathom of wampum, weapons and beads in exchange for their land, Penn laid out Philadelphia and set up a representative assembly. The

colony prospered, and unlike the Puritan Bay Colony freely opened its doors to outsiders for he freely promoted the principle of religious toleration. Pennsylvania's fertile soil and religious liberty attracted many Continental European Protestants (no Catholics), and they came — German Lutherans, Moravians and Mennonites, and from the Br. Isles Presbyterian Scotch-Irish, and Baptists, particularly the Welsh Baptists. But Pa. clearly was a Quaker colony. Proprietor Penn returned to England in 1701 to stay.

William Thomas, a lay minister of Wales, prepared to emigrate to such a welcoming colony. Having inherited the paternal *Blassaw* property, he sold it in 1712 to provide funds for his daring move to Penn's Woods. To this end he brought wife, infant son, household goods and a goodly sum of money to Bristol harbor and booked passage to Philadelphia. In his absence to the country to await the appointed departure date, his ship took early leave — with all his possessions. On shore he frantically beheld its sails still in view, and engaged a craft to pursue it in hopes of boarding,but soon lost it to far horizons.

Forced to take a passage on credit on a later vessel, he arrived in Philadelphia Feb. 14, 1712 — unaware he was now penniless for the dishonest master of the first ship had impoverished him by selling all his possessions aboard. With his own unbelieving eyes William saw Philadelphians wearing his clothes and possessing his goods.

Fortunately he found himself among sympathetic Radnor Township Welsh emigrants and Philadelphia Quakers. William Penn had returned to England for the final time 11 years earlier leaving his "City of Brotherly Love" the largest mercantile and cultural center of America. It was the hub of Caribbean imports — sugar, rum, molasses; its citizenry engaged in manufacturing and ship building. This economy proved fortuitous for William Thomas as he was obliged to fall back on his old trade to pay his debts. Coopering was in great demand in this fresh water port of 10,000 — the largest city in America. In his Radnor Township cooperage William briskly turned out or repaired many a shipping cask or tub. In those lean years he often loaded his old horse with cedar wares to market them in Philadelphia.

Before dying in 1757, William Thomas lived to see more changes and progress in the city --- from hearing the cowherd's horn as cows were daily led to a distant pasture, to see the building of a steepled Anglican Church containing Penn's baptismal font shipped from England and the construction of Independence Hall to accommodate the State Assembly. He knew about the late arrival of a printer named Benjamin Franklin who founded America's first lending library and first hospital, and a university complete with a medical school.

In those days the industrious cooper and lay minister William Thomas managed to pay his creditors, particularly Watkins a Welshman, and save a little money. Within 6 years he was able to buy land, the hope of every Englishman for in his homeland only the titled and wealthy could afford this prized possession. He looked for cheap wilderness land.

Elder William^1 Thomas, Yeoman

William's first parcel was purchased in Bucks County in 1718 only 28 miles from Philadelphia — 440A of wild land for £88, or about $1.00 per acre. In one decade he became one of the chief landholders in the county, amassing a total of 1258A in at least 4 purchases — all in Hilltown Township. To accommodate his growing family he built on his first parcel a 1½-story house of field stone. Equipped with ax and grubbing hoe and sustained with hard apple cider, neighboring Welsh Friends and Baptists helped clear his valley land of stones, and girdle the largest trees on the slopes to cause them to die and fall to the whims of winter winds. In time his 5 sons helped him to farm tillable acres they wrested from hickory and white oak stands.

In 1722 William was one of 13 Welsh to sign a petition to build a road to the Mitchell mill, which indicated a willingness to "*cout our part of this Rode*". The grist mill was necessary for wheaten bread, and dumplings on boiled meat. The valley soil was fertile, lush meadows fattened cattle and sheep, soft water springs abounded on the slopes. Women spun wool, the boys killed rattlers in fields before corn husking, the "swain and his damsel" rode horses to the "frolic" and to the church. Marketing wheat and pork, William hauled it to Philadelphia by pack horse before the road was built for

wheeled transport.

Rev. Joseph Mathias in penning his 1831 manuscript on his family history said that his kinsman William^1 Thomas was blessed by the Lord in "his soul and in his substance". Considered prosperous, William donated land for building a Welsh Baptist meeting house on his own property, and willingly lent money to needy neighbors. Mathias tells of an awkward situation involving a conflagration due to our yeoman's carelessness. While hunting in a field not his own, William fired at a flock of partridges feeding near an old barn, and the smoking wadding from his musket set the straw on fire, burning down the barn. The owner (obviously not a Quaker) threatened to sue for damages. William quickly forked over the 5 demanded of him.

William could be sharp-tongued in speech but was known to use the gentle Quaker's "thee and thou" language in daily conversation. In personal appearance he is said to have been short and thick-set, with dark eyes, complexion and hair. Neighbors often observed the roughly clad yeoman as he led his horse to market. He held to no aristocratic airs as that other unrelated Thomas family residing in Hilltown — the slave owners. ("Thomas" being the 7th most common English surname requires the researcher's diligence in tracing his family tree).

Little is known of William Thomas' wife Ann, other than she bore him 7 children in their 42 years together. Their first son Thomas^2 Thomas was born in Wales, the others in Pa. — John, Gwently, Ephraim, Mannasseh, Anna, William, jr. — all born between 1711 and 1723.

Ann was thought to be a Griffith, a common name in Wales as it was in their own Pa. neighborhood. Rev. Benjamin Griffith of the Montgomery church was their long time pastor and Thomas' mentor. It may be noted that a John Griffith and his son Nathaniel signed William's will which had been drawn up by Rev. Benjamin Griffith. Perhaps they were related. In addition to clothing these children in homespun wool, knitting their stockings and mittens, and filling their hungry mouths with pig meat, puddings and minced "pyes", she must have sanded the kitchen floor (she owned no slaves like the other Hilltown Thomases), dried medicinal herbs from her own garden,

dipped candles and made soap, picked geese for the featherbeds, kept hearth fires burning to stew squirrel and wild duck in copper kettles that needed scouring even more than the family pewter. She even may have possessed one of those marvelous stoves that Mr. Franklin invented, although the German settlers were the first to try these out. But it is unlikely that she owned a single silken garment for herself as worn by the richly gowned Philadelphia matron. While she was less assertive than the forward Quaker female who wore only broadcloth and the most expensive kind at that, she likely read her Bible more — and in the Welsh language.

Ann Thomas died in 1752, age 72, and was interred in the little burial ground adjacent to the humble Welsh church her husband built and shepherded. He died 5 years later and was also buried here.

One of William Thomas' compelling goals in life was to leave his children comfortable, to build each a stone house upon their marriage, and to bequeath each a farm at his death. This he accomplished with great diligence.

Elder William[1] Thomas, Lay Minister

My personal files contain a photostat copy of Bucks Co. Abstract in Book No. 2, Dec. 11, 1753 of the "Last Will and Testament of William Thomas of Hilltown, Yeoman". Yeoman is generally thought of as one who owns and cultivates a small farm. Yet we know our William's land holdings were among the largest in Hilltown — nearly 2 square miles! One must recall that 1753 Pa. was still a British colony and in English "yeoman" at that time specifically meant "one belonging to a class of English freeholders below the rank of gentry" — landed, but without the treasured title of "Mr."

The bequeathment and instructions pertaining thereto are numerous in William's will which will be considered in more detail later. But his children received their coveted farms, with most of them already settled on the patrimonial land when their stone houses were built at their nuptials. Ephraim received 150A, Mannasseh 150, John 200, Thomas 300, Anna 100, and Gwently 100. A daughter's bequeathment of landed property, it must be observed, was understood to be hers only as long as she lived, then

transferred to the direct male heirs. When daughter Anna died 90 days after her father without living heir, her 100A parcel went to her youngest brother William, jr., who inherited "the remainder of the 440A where I now live", according to their father's will. All 5 sons were made joint executors of the will, and all 5 likewise were to serve as Trustees of the Lower Meeting House their father had built on his land. This last will and testament of Elder William Thomas was drawn up four years before his death by his Montgomery church pastor and co-worker, Rev. Benjamin Griffith.

According to Rev. Joseph Mathias, (the 4th Montgomery pastor who held this position for 45 years), in his 1831 manuscript, William in Wales was a member of the Blanew Baptist Church in Glamorganshire; Rev. Abel Morgan was his pastor. Himself gifted as an exhorter of "easy address", young William even then began preaching in his own house in Bedwlldy Parish. Both Rev. Morgan and William came to Penn's Colony in 1712, but not together for William missed the first boat and arrived on a later vessel destitute, defrauded by the ship's master. Philadelphia had become the principal Baptist center in the Colonies. The first to arrive were the Welsh Baptists — some 30 years before Rev. Morgan and William set foot in that city.

Even as an American cooper, William was known to preach in open air or house to Welsh Baptists continuing to pour into Pa. Rev. Mathias deemed him a "pious and practical preacher", one who preached gratuitously while paying his debts by toiling with his hands at his cooperage.

In 1724 William was received by letter from the Philadelphia church, probably the one pastored by Rev. Abel Morgan from 1716, into the Montgomery church 3 miles from his Hilltown home. Rev. Benjamin Griffith, half-brother to Rev. Abel Morgan, was the Montgomery pastor, and remained so for 47 years. A cultivated linguist, historian, preacher and writer, Rev. Griffith's chief published work was printed by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1747. Soon after receiving his letter, our progenitor William Thomas was appointed assistant in Rev. Griffith's church. Under this pastor's tutelage, the lesser educated and unordained yeoman William learned

preaching skills, exhorting in both Welsh and English. Back in England the Crown under the Act of Toleration of 1689 had granted dissenters licenses to preach, and Baptist William Thomas obtained his before sailing to the New World, but neither here nor in America was he ever ordained. His license, however, granted him authority to perform marriages.

In 1737 at age 59 William built his own meetinghouse on Hilltown's Bethlehem road (the road to the Moravian settlement) as an adjunct of the Montgomery church; it was not a separate organization. Construction came about because many Bucks County Welsh had settled farther from the Montgomery church just across the county line than William himself had and could benefit from a meetinghouse nearer their farms, especially in winter. However, Elder Thomas meanwhile continued as Rev. Griffith's assistant, and he and his Hilltown congregation frequently met at the Lord's Table in Griffith's church.

Elder Thomas' church was known as the "Lower Meetinghouse". He built it of field stone on 4A on his own hillside which provided ample space for a burial ground. He fashioned his pulpit from a hollow gum tree, raising it vertically from a platform. At its base, it is reported, he would prop his gun and powder bag before ascending the pulpit to preach when alarms sounded that Indians of the Blue Mountains were on the warpath. During the French and Indian War his congregation, also with guns in possession, received their doctrinal and military instruction in the same Sabbath meeting.

Edward Matthews' book of 1884 — The Thomas Family Genealogy of Hilltown, Bucks Co., Pennsylvania — described Elder Thomas as an orthodox Calvinist, preaching and practicing its beliefs. One principle tenet was that only believers could be baptized; infant baptism was therefore rejected. And Baptists were the first to state the belief that men should not be forced by the State to worship contrary to conscience. They should be able to choose their religion themselves as only they must stand before the Judgment Seat of God to answer for themselves — hence, separation of Church and State was necessary. Roger Williams of Rhode Island held this view, but it is historically incorrect to say he was the founder of the Baptist Church in

America.

Sixteenth century revolts from Catholicism had made great theological changes in Europe. When German monk Luther, believing salvation came by faith and not by works, posted his 95 Theses, he was excommunicated. He then translated Erasmus' New Testament into the German language for the people. Belief in the sale of indulgences, Papal supremacy, and the observance of certain sacraments were discredited; baptism of infants was not among them. Some dissidents did not follow Luther but started churches of their own, such as the Reformed Church in Switzerland led by John Calvin. Holland followed suit and became the land of liberty where Mennonites and Anabaptists converged; these latter adherents decried infant baptism and for this "heresy" were mercilessly drowned or burned by both Protestants and Catholics.

Reformed Churches believed in the basic tenets set forth in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, the monumental work of Calvin, and the book likely the most influential one book of the Protestant Reformation. Its tenets were:

(1. Total Depravity — Fallen man is unable to save himself.

(2. Unconditional Election — God's election is not conditioned by anything in man.

(3. Limited Atonement — Christ's death was sufficient to all, but effective only for the elect.

(4. Irresistible Grace — The gift of faith given by God's Holy Spirit cannot be resisted by God's elect.

(5. Perseverance of the Saints — Those who are regenerated and justified will (must) persevere in the faith.

England was Catholic until King Henry VIII seized control of the Church. In his 10th year as monarch, he, then a devout Catholic, had attacked Luther's view on the Seven Sacraments for which the Pope entitled the king "Defender of the Faith". But 14 years later Henry's break with Rome initiated the English Reformation with himself as head of the Church of England; it was neither Roman Catholic nor Calvinist.

Once severed from the Papal grip, Englishmen continued to protest even the claims of the newly established Anglican Church. Some founded their own churches with doctrines based, not on a State mandated theology, but on their own various interpretations of the Bible now being printed in English. Coverdale, using the Vulgate, Luther's German, Tyndale's English, and Hebrew and Greek, published the first English translation of the entire Bible, dedicating it to Henry VIII. This version was followed by the Geneva Bible which had been printed for Protestant exiles fleeing England's persecutions during Catholic Queen Mary's bloody reign to find refuge in Calvinist Geneva, Switzerland. This version became the Book of the Calvinist Pilgrims and Puritans of the 17th century.

Each dissenting sect had its own roster of founders and heroes of the faith. One such founder was John Knox of the Scottish Reformation; another, George Fox, the apostle of the "Inner Light". Another hero was John Bunyan in the days of Charles II who penned a rhyme for children — "An egg is not a chicken by falling from a hen, Nor is a man a Christian, till he is born again." Bunyan had learned about being "born again" from a group of poor women in Bedford, and experiencing a "heart" religion himself he went on to boldly preach it. Confined to the Bedford prison for 12 years for his preaching, he wrote Pilgrim's Progress while incarcerated.

Calvinists defined themselves as "Reformed" in accordance with the Word of God — "believing that whatever church practice was not commanded by Scripture was forbidden". *The Pilgrims wishing to separate themselves from the State Church did so, first by seeking refuge in Holland, then on to America to Plymouth Colony via the Mayflower. Puritans, on the other hand, merely wanted Parliament to remove the more Popish practices from the Church of England, but as it did nothing they also fled England via London lawyer John Winthrop's famous Fleet in search of religious freedom, to establish a self-governing colony free from religious tyranny, one limiting the power of government to control conscience.*

In practice little religious freedom was realized in either colony. The Puritans in particular were notorious for excommunicating and disfellow-

shipping all those with whom they disagreed. Thus, Roger Williams who militantly believed in separation of Church and State, and Anne Hutchinson also tried and convicted for contrary beliefs, were banished and established their own colonies in Rhode Island. George Fox's Quakers in the Bay Colony suffered most of all — whipped, tarred and feathered, tongues cut out to still their preaching — and when all else failed, hanged on the Boston Commons. William Penn with a new vision of a "Holy Experiment" then procured the Pennsylvania grant from Charles II to settle Quakers and other dissidents in trouble with their Crowns and State Churches.

Among those to seek this refuge in Penn's Woods were the Welsh Baptists, the earliest arriving in 1682. Our progenitor — William Thomas arrived in 1712 as did his pastor Rev. Abel Morgan who brought his Welsh Bible.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN WELSH BIBLES must have appeared to other ethnic settlers, particularly of the British Isles, like no other Scriptures in the European vernacular:

Ein Tad yr hwn yn y ne foedd, Sancteiddier dy Enw.
Deled dy deyrnas.
Gwncler dy ewyllys, megis yn y nef, felly ar y ddaear
hefyd.
Dyro i ni heddyn ein bara beunyddiol.
A madden i ni ein dyledion, fel y maddeuwn ninaa
in dyledwyr.
Ac nacarwain ni i brofedigaeth, eithr gwared
nirhagdrwg.
Canys eiddot ti yw'r deyrnas, *a'r nearth,*
a'r gogoniant, yn oes oesoedd.
Amen.

Welsh was generally spoken by both adults and the young in the early days, and, of course, their ministers preached to them in that language as well as in English. This was known to be true of Elder (the preferred title for a preacher as being more Scriptural than "Reverend") William Thomas, our progenitor, who was never salaried but earned his livelihood at coopering and farming. His first preaching in Hilltown Township between 1725 and the time he built his Lower Meeting House in 1737 was often in settler homes, or in

summer open air under convenient shady trees.

Our Elder William left no published sermons. But from Pencader's Records of Welsh Baptist Meetings 1701-1828, it can be inferred the "gospel" he preached — baptism of adult believers, for infant baptism lacked Scriptural authority; election of saints; final perseverance in grace; and a doctrine called "laying-on-of-hands", i.e. Elders' laying on hands on the baptized as a symbol of receiving the Holy Ghost as was performed by the Apostles in Acts. This latter view was held largely by Arminian Baptists. This belief was emphasized so strongly that no one could sit at the Lord's Table if the communicant denied this particular doctrine.

Church rules were strict, too strict for William, jr.'s wife, Abigail Day, as we shall see Church attendance was required. Members called one another "brother" and "sister", and, while enjoined to walk in holiness and brotherly love, were not to neglect to warn and rebuke the one who strayed like Abigail. Nor was the family head to neglect his own family or business. Divorce was not tolerated.

Grounds for church dismissal were many. These included refusing the church's instruction, despising the advice of its brethren, opposing the truth, bringing reproach on the church by gross conduct, and expecting salvation by works rather than by faith. Both Rev. Benjamin Griffith and Rev. Abel Morgan labored together to revise and enlarge a treatise of church discipline which was attached to the Baptist Confession of Faith. They took fierce exception to Hilltown's Simon Butler's and Joseph Eaton's stand on the "Sonship of Jesus Christ" — the Arian heresy that the Son was a created being.

Pencader reported several cases of excommunication for personal misconduct; i.e. — a Morgan female for "unseemingly dress which even the world thought to be unbecoming"; another female for marrying against the church's advise; men, for associating with the godless; a couple for "keeping company too often and too unseemly". Of course, unmarried R.S. was "dismembered" for "shee was with child by . . . [fornicator named]; a male adulterer for living several years with women and having children by them."

One could also be disowned for tale bearing, using vile language and cursing, and drinking "to excess to ye hurt of his family." This latter breach of conduct would be William Thomas, jr.'s downfall, and the manner of his untimely death in 1764. But one woman was only suspended for "lukewarmness", but was excluded from Communion for taking her granddaughter to a Presbyterian church for "sprinkling" [not immersion].

The congregation felt it its duty to cut off the transgressor "from all ye special privileges of Christ's church". But such a person could be reinstated on examination if he cleared himself by being truly repentant, and be received back into full Communion.

The Welsh Baptist believer went on record as one "who may and ought to forgive injuries done to himself, but he can not forgive sins that are more immediately against God", as he has no power to forgive and discharge a transgression from the justice of God. It is apparent church members in good standing were quick to identify "heretics and sinners", judging these by their own standards, and consequently judged them harshly.

This can be seen in Elder William Thomas' last Will and Testament of Dec., 1753, in regard as to whom would be allowed into his precious preaching pulpit after his death. His hostility toward Catholics, and his sectarian spirit is clearly shown in its wording: —"*I give and bequeath* unto the inhabitants of Hilltown, forever, the meeting house erected by myself, together with the graveyard in which to bury their dead, and all others, far and near, black and white. Such as are guilty of self-murder I only reject and deny to be buried in my graveyard or in any part of my land .... I give unto the inhabitants of said township forever to bury their dead in, and to school their children ... and to perform Christian worship under the foregoing and following directions and restrictions, viz: "I allow tolerated ministers to preach funeral sermons either in the graveyard or meeting house, which they like best. Papists and heretics I reject and altogether deny them any grant. My will is that the Baptists hold religious meetings in said house as often as they can: but not anyone that deny the Nicene Creed. [That is, "I believe in one God" ... the Christian creed of the Nicene Council of 325 A.D., and

expanded 1569 by Catholics defining the orthodox Christian doctrine. Italics are mine]. I allow the Presbyterians to preach in the said house, provided they hold the Westminster Confession of Faith, likewise Independents. But if it happens that any one of them will not swear allegiance to a Protestant king [who in England in 1753 was George II — this left out Louis XV and Frederick of Germany] such I deny and disallow altogether." In Rev. Joseph Mathias' 1831 manuscript, he states that Elder Thomas welcomed Baptists to his pulpit but not those who "deny to sign the Nicene Creed", probably referring to the Arians in Hilltown.

Elder William^{1}Thomas' 1753 Will continues: "Papists nor Moravians I allow not to preach in said house, nor any other strangers let them appear ever so godly until they are well known to be sound in the faith. My will is that catechizing children shall be kept up in the said meeting house forever by orthodox catechism, and in order that my will therein may be observed, I do constitute and depute my five sons, Thomas, John, Ephraim, Mannasseh and William to assist and take proper care therein".

Elder William^{1} Thomas , our Welsh progenitor from Llanwenarth, departed this life in his Hilltown home Oct. 6, 1757, age 79. The Elder was laid to rest in the graveyard of the Lower Meeting House where his deceased wife Ann already lay for 5 years. Their 7 children would ultimately be interred here as well.

His large flat marble grave stone reads ---

"In memory of William Thomas,
Licensed minister of the Gospel
Who died October 6, Anno Domini 1757
Aged 79 years."

The stone also contains the Elder's engraved epitaph, one believed to have been penned by himself as original verse:

"In yonder meetinghouse I spend my breath.
Now silent, mouldering here, I lie in death;
These silent lips shall wake, and yet declare
A dread amen to truth they published there".

Bucks County historians speak well of Elder Thomas. Edward Matthews says he was a man of mark and celebrity in the early history of

Bucks Co. J.H. Battle's county history said the Elder was one of the earliest and most distinguished Welsh in Hilltown — a most reputable man. W.W.H. Davis in his county history commented that the Elder, a conspicuous character and influential, was a sturdy sectarian.

Elder William^1 Thomas' Sectarianism Examined

By 1757, the date of William^1 Thomas' death, many Christian sects had settled in Penn's Quaker colony. While Quakers themselves had become wealthy and tolerant of many views different from their own, Elder Thomas was less inclined. Battle, as we have seen, commented wryly — "Elder Thomas did not suffer his convictions to lose that positiveness characteristic of his race". Not even William the Conqueror could squelch the Welsh! Thomas' sectarian spirit was evident in his will of 1753. And he made certain his convictions would be honored after his death by appointing his 5 sons Trustees to monitor his doctrinal "purity".

While the Elder bequeathed "forever to Hilltown inhabitants" his meeting house, he alone disallowed Papists and "heretics" access to his gum tree pulpit. Although Jesuits had only recently established several Catholic churches in Pa., they were not heartily received there. Even in Catholic Maryland Papists were a minority. The writer of this narrative has spent many years researching the religious roots of personal ancestors settling the Atlantic Coastal Colonies only to discover one Catholic (registered as "the Papist") in the family tree, the Dutchman Van de Mark come to New Netherlands (N.Y.) in the mid-1600's. It appears that none of his sons adopted their father's faith. Hardly would a Papist try to seek the Thomas pulpit in the 1700's!

"Heretics" could mean preachers who "did not tick as William^1 ticked". But he was not that narrow, for he allowed "tolerated ministers" to ascend his pulpit — mainly Baptists. And not even all of these — only those holding to the Nicene Creed. Arian Baptists had appeared in Hilltown claiming Christ was more than man, but less than God, thereby rejecting the Sonship of Christ. Moreover, all "tolerated ministers" must have taken the oath of allegiance to the King of England, already required of immigrants by

Philadelphia's city hall.

"Tolerated ministers" probably did not include the likes of the Tennent preachers. A Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, William Tennent and his 4 sons had built Log College to train evangelists in their own Bucks Co. yard on the Neshaminy River, a branch of which flowed across the Thomas farm. This school ultimately became the origin of Princeton across the Delaware where Yale graduate Jonathan Edwards was briefly President.

Edwards had great influence on the revival movement known as the Great Awakening which reached its spiritual apex the last two decades of our Elder Thomas' life. The evangelical preaching of Edwards in New England, and that of British George Whitefield during his 7 visits to America, stirred the backsliding to renewal. In Philadelphia Whitefield's fiery oratory moved even Deist Benjamin Franklin to empty his pockets of gold and silver coin in support of that preacher's orphanage in Georgia, even if it did not open his mind to a belief in the Triune God. The Philadelphia printer published some of the Reverend's sermons and journals for him. They remained friends for life.

Whitefield was popular in Philadelphia; he preached to thousands, converting many, including an "unconverted" clergy. Doubtlessly our Welsh Baptist ancestor William^{I} Thomas upon making regular trips to Philadelphia to sell his cooper wares and farm substance heard snatches of these fervent sermons (Whitefield preached 18,000 sermons in both England and America in his 34 year career) delivered in open air meetings as he led his laden pack horse to the markets.

During this Awakening revivalist flames stirred up more than cold ashes in Protestant pulpits. Many churches condemned the movement; others growing rapidly filled with converted young people (the New Lights). Opposition from the Old Lights rose; schism ensued. This conservative older generation condemned revivalism, and its excessive emotionalism as witnessed in Jonathan Edwards preaching "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" in Enfield, Conn. in 1740. The Old Lights accused the evangelical clergy of self-righteousness, and encouraging the cult of personality as

perceived in the character of Count Zinzendorf of the Moravians.

It is thought that New England Baptists were slow to accept revivalism because of Bostonian harsh treatment earlier. In the Bay Colony Baptist leaders were whipped or fined for disallowing their infants a baptism as the rite lacked Scriptural authority. Welsh Baptists led by Rev. John Myles, fleeing persecution, went to Roger Williams' more tolerant Providence colony. Many more Baptists emigrated to Pa. Here they encountered the Dutch Mennonite conviction that civil government should not be allowed to control the religious individual's conscience. Soon Philadelpha became the principal Baptist center in the Colonies. It can be readily assumed Elder William[1] Thomas numbered among the preachers who opposed this new fervent Puritan "Great Awakening". The Puritan parson thus tarnished by history would scarcely be "tolerated" in Welsh circles.

Our preacher ancestor Elder Thomas was especially hostile to Moravians. We can only speculate why. We have already noted he built his church on the road to Bethlehem, the Moravian settlement some 20 miles north of his homestead — near enough for his critical observation. He must have disliked their communal lifestyle, for his own personal profit accumulated through the work of his yeoman's hands was reserved for building field stone houses and providing farms for each of his 7 children.

On the other hand, Bethlehem was a communal society consisting of 97 buildings, including infant nurseries, schools and 5 mills. The Moravian Commune was much like the American Hutterite commune of today — a sharing of its combined wealth for the common good of all. While the individual Moravian was permitted to own property he was unable to reap its rewards as ~~did~~ had Thomas from his Hilltown homestead, as all Moravian profit was controlled by stringent regulations to support its magnificent obsession — that of supporting 50 missionaries engaged in converting Indians, not only in the Colonies but in Greenland and the West Indies as well. Thomas did not share this love for local Indians. Recall that the Elder propped musket and gun powder at the base of his Sunday pulpit to put a speedy end if need be to red marauders swooping down from Pa.'s Blue Mountains threatening his

congregation, itself amply supplied with arms of defense.

The Moravian's material needs were met by Commune stores to free him and his wife to labor in field, mill and shop. His meals were eaten at Communal tables, his children placed in Communal nurseries until school age for boarding. This lifestyle resembled that of the kibbutz I observed in 1972 during a 2 day visit north of the Sea of Galilee. Here its members sacrificed individualism in order to strengthen the economy of the new state of Israel. Such an economy would be untenable to Elder Thomas' way of thinking driven as he was to provide material possessions (and probably patriarchal control) for his 7 children from the bounty of his cooperage and his land — all 2 square miles of it.

Elder Thomas surely must have condemned other signature Moravian beliefs and practices. In this he was not alone, for Moravian missionary zeal was held in deep suspicion by citizens. Many Pa. settlers resisted the attempts of Count Zinzendorf, a Saxon noble and religious reformer, to unify the many German sects under the Confession of Augsburg. The Count leaned heavily toward the Bethlehem Moravians for he had sponsored their migration to America. A "sheep stealer", the people called him. Mennonites clung to their Dort Confession, the Lutherans to the Heidelberg Catechism. Dunkers (German Baptists) continued their trine immersion — 3 times forward in a flowing stream. Schwenkfelders did not view the sacraments as vehicles of grace. Nor did locals subscribe to Moravian "strange and sundry" doctrines — their fascination with the virtue of pain, their fanaticism with the blood and wounds in Christ's Atonement. Even painful childbirth had great spiritual significance. And Elder Thomas may have taken particular umbrage with Pietism, a spiritual movement originating in 17th century Germany in reaction to formalism and intellectualism, stressing rather Bible study and personal religious experience. Most German sects in general and Moravians in particular, and later the British revivalists John Wesley and George Whitefield, preached personal religious experience of saving faith, the springboard for evangelical revivals in the Middle Colonies.

It may be recalled that Oxford graduate Wesley was sent to Georgia as

a missionary to convert Indians, and returned to England a failure, but back in London he attended a Moravian meeting at Aldergate where he experienced "warm hearted piety" which changed him — and England. In his 65 years preaching in field and chapel and his concern for social reform peacefully revolutionized his homeland from a gin-soaked nation of street terror and moral decay.

In America, Wesley's friend Rev. Whitefield's gospel preaching brought the more moral but cold and lifeless Puritan to cleansing revival fires, so much so that Benjamin Franklin commented "that all the world … growing religious, so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street".

Members of the Bucks Co. Thomas family come to town on business in the 1730's and 1740's must have at least surreptitiously witnessed this fervor of religious devotion on the streets of Philadelphia.

William^2 Thomas, jr., the Black Sheep (1723-1764)

From the last born of Elder William^1 Thomas' children, William^2 jr., stems my family descent. One historian writes that he alone of the 5 brothers was the "black sheep" of the family. Only his sister Anna preceded him in death — during childbirth 6 years earlier.

On pages 39-40 in Rev. Mathias' 1831 manuscript, the preacher describes William^2 Thomas "handsome and brightly, more gay and volatile…." At an early age he married Abigail Day of Welsh parentage". Their children were William^3, Joseph, and Martha.

Our William^2's death was no ordinary one. In 1764 he was murdered one July night in his own door yard. After the Newton trial of the accused female declared her not guilty, the court dismissed the case. Back in Hilltown it appears that strong effort was taken to conceal the real facts, according to historian Edward Matthews in his history.

But William^2 jr. lived long enough at his father's inherited "mansion house" to recognize his brothers' good names and Baptist piety. There is no evidence that William^2, jr. himself was ever baptized or became a church member as in the case of his siblings.

The world was quickly changing in their day. The celebrated Capt. Cook voyage discovered Australia. Handel's Messiah with its "Hallelujah Chorus" was performed in London before George II. Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley's hundreds of hymns changed church music. In the Colonies Elder Thomas went to his grave 3 years before George III was crowned King of England, to wear that crown for 60 years during which time he lost his tenacious grasp on the colonies ending in the American Revolution. Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin revolutionizing the textile industry; now settlers could replace linsey-woolsey with cotton. In Pa. Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals. Smallpox inoculations were introduced which incidentally caused the death of Princeton president Jonathan Edwards as he offered himself as guinea pig to encourage his college student body to do the same. In 1784 Hilltown Township members numbered 941 souls at home in 154 dwellings. Potatoes had become common for human consumption and the yeoman's turnips went to fatten livestock. But Change came slowly to the church. The Welsh Baptist church remained strict — too strict for some.

This was a slice of the world in the days of Elder William^1 Thomas' children. They numbered 7: —

1. The Welsh-born Thomas^2 Thomas (1711-1780) died, age 69, a large landholder affluent enough to own slaves to work his estate of 829 acres. He was good-looking and tall, not short and stocky like his father and brothers. Twice married, (a. Margret Bates; b. Mary Williams) he had 13 children. Two sons served as patriot soldiers in the American Revolution, Amos as Captain and Asa as guard at the Brandywine Crossing in that battle of 1777. One son, Job, a Tory, remained loyal to George III and after the war removed to Nova Scotia to be under British government. Son Jonah, jocular but intemperate, married a neighbor girl of the Freeman family and they named one of their youngsters "Freeman Thomas", a given name occasionally appearing on the family tree thereafter as we have already seen. Son Jonah lost his estate to demon rum. Four of the Thomas' daughters married into non-Welsh families. Thomas^2 Thomas was a Montgomery Welsh Baptist church member, and that church recorded his death as Jan. 30, 1780. He lived to know about the

Boston Tea Party and the Declaration of Independence . Had he ridden the 25 miles to Philadelphia on that first famous July 4th he would have heard the ringing of the Liberty Bell.

2. Ordained Rev. John^2 Thomas (b. 9 Dec. 1713 - d. 31 Oct. 1790) was born in Dela. Co. when his father was a cedar cooper in Radnor Township. In 1757 he filled the Elder's Hilltown pulpit for several years, then for 18 years became Montgomery Church's second pastor after the death of Rev. Benjamin Griffith, his mentor. A County historian wrote that while "he occupied his pulpit but not his place in the community" ~~as~~ his talent for preaching was mediocre. Like Moses — he was slow of speech. Nevertheless, records show that many Thomases were in his congregation. He relied on his patrimony and a meager annual £40 salary to support his young wife and children until brought down with a paralytic stroke. His 4 daughters gave him grandchildren — two of whom became missionaries to Africa, one a U.S. preacher, and one went to Congress. Rev. John lived only 1½ years after George Washington was inaugurated as the first U.S. President in New York City's Federal Hall April 30, 1789. Rev. John^2 married Sarah James in 1738; she died 1805, age 94. Her funeral was the first preached by 4th pastor of the Montgomery Church Rev. Joseph Mathias, who later penned the 1831 manuscript containing much Thomas family history. During his ministry he preached 700 funerals; he knew everybody.

3. Ephraim^2 Thomas (b. 1719 -d. July 31, 1776) , the wealthiest of the brothers, bought tracts of land to give to his 4 sons as his father had done for him and his brothers. He and his wife Eleanor Bates married in 1740; both were baptized 28 Aug., 1744 and were devout members at the Welsh church at Montgomery. That church ordained him as Elder after which he ministered to the community as consoler to the sick and dying. He reported he himself was afraid of death but not the Judgement. In his own final dark valley he suffered clouds of depression which finally lifted so that he died peacefully at age 57 only 27 days after the Declaration of Independence was signed in nearby Philadelphia. Besides the farms, his estate goods included shoats, sheep and other livestock, 2 muskets, and a sword and scabbard.

His epitaph located on a Lower Meeting House gravestone read:—

Entombed, I here an Elder Lie,
My work on earth is done,
The Church, I commit to God's Care
The Spirit and the Son.
And hope in heaven to meet you there
When you your race have won.

Ephraim and Eleanor had 11 children, none long-lived, several dying of tuberculosis. Eleanor died in 1802, age 82, surviving her husband by 26 years. Their daughters were said to be intelligent and vivacious and were quite dark with black hair and eyes. A granddaughter Dinah b.1777 was married to Rev. Josiah Mathias in 1804, pastor of the Montgomery church for 45 years.

4. Mannasseh^2 Thomas (1721 - 1802), the last surviving son of Elder William^1 Thomas, died at 81 in Hilltown. He married Elizabeth Evans, and at least 2 of their issue grew to maturity. A pious Baptist, Mannasseh often ably exhorted (not slow of speech as Rev. John^2) in the Montgomery and Hilltown meeting houses where his brother pastored. His last will provided funds to support the catechism program of his congregation; this place provided the only school in the area. Notoriously frugal, he buried pots of money, coins perhaps,(for Philadelphia minted 1st copper coin in 1793), about his stone fences and barn as protection against the DOAN raiders from the adjacent Plumstead Township during the turbulent days of the American Revolution.

In Mannasseh's later days George Washington's second inauguration took place in 1793 Philadelphia; then the U.S. capitol was moved to the new Washington D.C. on the Potomac in 1800. Here Thomas Jefferson sat as the 3rd U.S. President from 1801.

The Montgomery Church recorded the death of Mannasseh Thomas of Hilltown on Feb. 7, 1802. At least one superstitious neighbor believed he sighted old Mannasseh's ghost clad in knee breeches and cocked hat meandering around at dusk near his fence and barn searching for his long-buried treasure.

his epitaph located on a Lower Meeting House gravestone read --

Farewell, I have an Elder [illegible],
My work on earth is done,
The Church, I commit to God's Care
The Earth and the sea,
And hope in Heaven to meet you there
When your [illegible] here [illegible].

Ephraim and Eleanor had 11 children, some long-lived, several dying of consumption. Eleanor died in 1812, age 62, surviving her husband by 28 years. Their daughters were said to be intelligent and vivacious and each quite dark with black hair and eyes. A granddaughter Sarah b.1777 was married to Rev. Josiah Thomas in 1804, pastor of the Montgomery church for 9 years.

4. Manasseh Thomas (1721 - 1802), the last surviving son of Elder William Thomas, died at 81 in Hilltown. He married Elizabeth Evans, and at least 7 of their issue grew to maturity. A stout Baptist, Manasseh often ably exhorted [illegible] of speech as Rev. John [illegible] in the Montgomery and Hilltown meeting houses when the pastor was absent. He, too, had [illegible] funds to support the [illegible] program of his congregation: this [illegible] provided the only school in the area. [illegible], he buried [illegible] of money, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Tories and later as protection against the [illegible] raiders from the adjacent Hilltown Township during the turbulent days of the American Revolution.

In Manasseh's time [illegible] George Washington's second inauguration took place in 1793, Philadelphia was then the U.S. capital and was moved to the new Washington D.C. on the Potomac in 1800. Here Thomas Jefferson served as the 3rd U.S. President from 1801.

The Montgomery Church recorded the death of Manasseh Thomas of Hilltown on Feb. 7, 1802. At least one [illegible] [illegible] believed he [illegible] his Montgomery [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for his long-buried treasure.

5. & 6. William^2 Thomas, jr. also had 2 sisters. Anna ^{2} married Stephen Rowland and died in childbirth with her first born, 1759. Leaving no male heir, her patrimony of 100A became the property of her brother William^2, jr. Some think Anna may have been Ephraim's twin as 1719 is cited as the birth year for both. Gwently^2 Thomas, born 1716, married Morris Morris, grandson of early English Quakers of Hilltown. She also was a member of brother John's Welsh church. She had 9 children, including Benjamin a celebrated clock maker. Her eldest son Cadwaller, inherited her patrimony of 100A .

William^2 Thomas, jr. (1723-1764)
and his Wife --- Abigail Day

My Thomas lineage stems directly from William^2 jr., Welsh emigrant Elder Thomas' youngest child , and the first of his 5 sons to die — in 1764, When 24, he was married to Abigail Day, Jan. 17, 1747 in Bucks Co.

At age 41 William^2 was murdered one night after an all night drinking spree. Although tribal remnants remained in the area, no Indian was suspected. Whether he made it to his own doorway on his own, or was carried there is unknown, but he was found on his doorsill one July daybreak, dead by strangulation as the dark ring scoring his neck indicated. Family historian Edward Matthews penned "Civil authorities made an investigation and testimony was taken, though no one suffered any punishment". This explains an entry March 10, 1765 in the Montgomery church book of records as follows: — "Excommunicated Thomas Hutchin for scandalous conduct in taking an oath 2 times in a different manner in relation to the death of William Thomas!" Matthews knew nothing further about Thomas Hutchin ,or the charge of perjury.

Rev. Joseph Mathias, long time 4th pastor of the Montgomery church and married into the Thomas family, attempted a few remarks in his lengthy 1831 manuscript chronicling the Mathias and Thomas family history. Although he covered William^2 jr.'s descent together with a few comments about Abigail's later life, had he alluded to her husband's William^2 jr.'s murder as well? Then I made a discovery! Upon my personal examination of the 1831 Mathias manuscript located at the Salt Lake City LDS library, I discovered

that 4 ½ smudgy lines in the William^2 jr. paragraph had been deleted except for one word. "Helpmeet" appeared dimly in the erased space. Whatever message was intended to be conveyed in 1831 has been forever lost from that source! However Bucks County historian~~s~~, Matthews does refer to his tragic homicide, a local sensation at the time. The murder was and remains a mystery.

According to T. Matthews in his Thomas Family, Elder Thomas had some premonition [likely observation] that one of his sons would go astray, do no good and come to a violent end, which proved to be true only 7 years after the old preacher's death. Was William^2 jr. already "intemperate" [delicate language for drunken] at age 34? If so, William^2 Thomas, Hilltown yeoman, retained Trusteeship of the Lower Meetinghouse along with his brothers Thomas, John, and Ephraim at least until his will of Jan. 20, 1763, 18 months before his death. An abstract of this will shows that on that date his wife Abigail and his brother Mannesseh were appointed executors. Abigail was to have a white mare and the use of the 100A he received from his sister Anna. James Lewis was to succeed him as the Hilltown Meeting House Trustee.

Nineteen months later William^2 Thomas jr. was buried in this church's graveyard.

This will written in 1763 shows a cryptic reference to some of his "Land in Tenure of Jacob Fry". In other references it is known that just before his death William^2 jr. sold to German Jacob Cope, a 20A mill property on the Neshaminy River for £675. There is no record of its distribution.

In that same will William^2 jr. provided for his 3 children. Upon reaching 21, eldest son William^3 was to receive 50A and his father's house at Hilltown, with son Joseph^3 to receive 100A. These boys, 15 and 13 at the time, were also to be apprenticed to the trades at age 16. Younger daughter Martha was to receive 30A. The will was proved July 26, 1764, a few days after their father's murder.

Soon after her trial at Newton accused Abigail married a German, Philip Bitting, described by Rev. Josiah Mathias in his 1831 manuscript as being that a 5" smudgy line in the William^4 jr. paragraph had been deleted except for one word. "Wayward" appeared dimly in the erased space. Whatever message was intended to be conveyed in 1921 has been forever lost from that source. However Bucks County historian, Matthews does refer to the tragic homicide, a local sensation at the time. The murder was and remains a mystery.

According to T. Matthews in he Thomas Family, Elder Thomas had some premonition (likely observation) that one of his sons would go astray, do no good and come to a violent end, which proved to be true only 7 years after the old preacher's death. Was William^4 jr. already "intemperate" (delicate language for drunken) at age 34? If so, William^4 Thomas, Hilltown yeoman, retained Trusteeship of the Lower Meetinghouse along with his brothers Thomas, John, and Ephraim at least until his will of Jan. 20, 1763, 18 months before his death. An abstract of the will shows that on that date his wife Abigail and his brother Manasseh were appointed executors. Abigail was to have a white mare and the use of the 100A he received from his sister Anna. James Lewis was to succeed him as the Hilltown Meeting House Trustee.

Nineteen months later William^4 Thomas jr. was buried in the church's graveyard.

This will written in 1763 shows a cryptic reference to some of his "Land in Possion of Jacob Fry". In other references it is shown that just before his death William^4 jr. sold to German Jacob Cope, a 20A mill property on the Neshaminy River for £375. There is no record of its repurchase.

In that same will William^4 jr. provided for his 3 children. Upon reaching 21, eldest son William^5 was to receive 50A and his father's house in Hilltown, with son Joseph^5 to receive 100A. These boys, 15 and 13 at the time, were also to be apprenticed to the trades at age 15. Younger daughter Martha was to receive 20A. The will was proved July 26, 1764, a few days after their father's murder.

Soon after her year of mourning, widowed Abigail married a German, Philip Bitting, described by Rev. Joseph Matthews in his 1921 manuscript as being

Foothills Genealogical Society
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Lakewood, Colorado

FAMILY GROUP No. ______

Husband's Full Name CHRISTOPHER' DAY

Husband's Date	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province etc	State or Country
Birth	1680			ENGLAND or WALES
Mar				
Death	1748	PLUMSTEAD TWP.	BUCKS Co.	PA.
Burial				PA.

Occupation YEOMAN (farmer) Church QUAKER, or WELSH BAPTIST

Places of Residence WALES, To BUCKS Co, PA. ca. 1708

Other wives if any No (1) (2) etc Make separate sheet for each mar

Military Rec.

His Father CHRISTOPHER, b. 1641 BR. ISLES Mother's Maiden Name ELIZABETH GOWLAND, mar. 1676

Wife's Full Maiden Name MARTHA

Wife's Date	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country
Birth				
Death	after 1748			PA.
Burial				PA.

Occupation if other than Housewife

Church

Other husbands if any No (1) (2) etc Make separate sheet for each mar

Her Father

Mother's Maiden Name

	Sex	Children's Names in Full (Arrange in order of birth)	Children's Data	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province etc	State or Country
1		MATTHEW [aka "MARK"?]	Birth				
			Mar				
		Full Name of Spouse* 1st. ?	Death	before 1824			
		2nd. MARY FELLE, of FELIX	Burial				
2		CHRISTOPHER JR. DAY	Birth	1723			
			Mar.	17[illegible]		BUCKS CO.	PA.
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death	1763			PA.
		SARAH - d ca. 1789	Burial		PLUMSTEAD TWP.	BUCKS Co.	PA.
3		JOSEPH² DAY	Birth	ca. 1720			PA.
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death	JAN. 1781			PA.
		DOROTHY - d. 28 Oct. 1780	Burial.				
4		NATHANIEL DAY	Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse* killed by Shawnees	Death				
		SUSAN WYLEY. in Fred. Co, VA.	Burial				
5		URSULA DAY	Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death	APR. 1795		BUCKS Co.	PA.
		SAMUEL FENTON	Burial				
6		ABIGAIL DAY	Birth				
			Mar	28 NOV. 17__	CHRIST CHURCH, PHILA.		PA.
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
		PATRICK POE	Burial				
7			Birth				
			Mar				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
8			Birth				
			Mar				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				

*If married more than once No. each mar. (1) (2) etc

Use reverse side for additional children, other notes, references or information

Sources:

1. CHRISTOPHER DAY WILL of 1746 - BUCKS Co. WILLS ABSTRACT, No. 2 Book.
2. J. EDWARD DAY, DESCENDANTS OF CHRISTOPHER DAY OF BUCKS Co. PA. TYPED MS., 1955
3. HISTORY OF BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTGOMERY Co. PA.
4. BUCKS Co. HISTORY - by W.W.H. DAVIS; & J.H. BATTLE.

Foothills Genealogical Society
of Colorado, Inc.
Lakewood, Colorado

FAMILY GROUP No. ______

Husband's Full Name JOSEPH^{2} DAY

Husband's Data	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province etc	State or Country
Birth	ca. 1720			PA.
Mar				
Death	JAN. 1781			PA.
Burial				

Occupation ______ Church bp. Welsh Bapt. 8 Aug. 1741 Mont. Co. Pa.

Places of Residence PLUMSTEAD TWP. - BUCKS CO. PA.

Other wives if any No (1) (2) etc Make separate sheet for each mar ______ Military Rec. ______

His Father CHRISTOPHER^{1} DAY. of Plumstead Twp. Mother's Maiden Name MARTHA

Wife's Full Maiden Name DOROTHY

Wife's Data	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province, etc.	State or Country
Birth				
Death	OCT 1780			
Burial				

Occupation if other than Housewife ______ Church bp. Welsh Bapt. 8 Aug. 1741, Mont. Co. PA.

Other husbands if any No (1) (2) etc Make separate sheet for each mar

Her Father ______ Mother's Maiden Name ______

	Sex	Children's Names in Full (Arrange in order of birth)	Children's Data	Day Month Year	City, Town or Place	County or Province etc	State or Country
1		ABIGAIL DAY	Birth			BUCKS Co.	PA.
			Mar	17 JAN. 1747/51			
		Full Name of Spouse* 1ST - WM.^{2} THOMAS, b. 1723	Death	1811	PHILADELPHIA		PA.
		2ND - PHILIP BITTING in 1764	Burial		LOWER MEETING HOUSE	BUCKS CO.	PA.
2			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
3			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial.				
4			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
5			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
6			Birth				
			Mar				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
7			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				
8			Birth				
			Mar.				
		Full Name of Spouse*	Death				
			Burial				

*If married more than once No. each mar (1) (2) etc

Use reverse side for additional children, other notes, references or information

Sources:

1. EDWARD MATTHEWS:- THOMAS FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1884.
2. REV. JOSEPH MATHIAS:- 1831 MS. of MATHIAS FAMILY, FILM 216688 SLC
3. WILMA THOMAS :- JOSEPH GILLET FAMILY OF CT., OH., & KS., 1970.

4/5. HISTORIES OF BUCKS CO. PA. by W.W.H. DAVIS, and J.H. BATTLE

6. J. EDWARD DAY, DESCENDANTS OF CHRISTOPHER DAY OF BUCKS CO, PA. Typed MS., 1955.

"odd and middling worthless".

Abigail Day (b.___ ; d.1811)

The other Black Sheep

Chapter XII of The Thomas Family of Hilltown authored by T. Mathews describes the young Abigail Day, William^2 Thomas jr.'s wife as "evil and wayward". She was an only child of Welsh parents, Joseph (1720-1781) and Dorothy Day of nearby Plumstead township. They brought her up on a Hilltown farm bordering one of the many parcels of land bought by Ephraim^2, William^2 jr.'s third brother.

Had Mathews stopped with only his "unsavory reputation" we could suppose that in the Day strict religious background the girl committed some breech of conduct such as proudly donning some worldly beribboned gown, or using inappropriate language, or marrying a certain man against the advice of her parents — mere peccadillos by today's standards. But Mathews goes on to say, "After her marriage her attractions brought more admiration from other persons than was creditable to a married woman". There we have it — a heady, highminded pretty flirt — probably loose! Maybe a throwback on Welsh ancestors who successfully resisted even William the Conqueror in the Norman Conquest of 1066!

We know her parents were pious, for the Montgomery Welsh church records show that both Joseph and Dorothy Day were baptized Aug. 8, 1741 and they remained faithful to that church when the clerk recorded their deaths — Dorothy's on 22 Oct., 1780, and Joseph's 3 months later in Jan., 1781. Joseph was not always a Welsh Baptist; he was reared a Quaker.

Abigail's grandfather — Christopher Day (1688-1748), born in Wales or England, came to Plumstead township in 1708 a full decade before Elder Thomas bought his first property in nearby Hilltown. Tribal Indians still located in Plumstead lived peacefully beside the Quakers. These red men speared fish from the Neshaminy with 3 inch long green arrowheads, and begged cakes from the English Quakers before the first Welsh even arrived. These first Quakers in Plumstead included the families of Day, Doan, and Michiner.

It is known that Christopher Day was a witness at a Quaker wedding in 1722 and signed the meeting house Minute legitimatizing that Union in accordance with Quaker belief in separating their matrimony bonds from government supervision; signing such a paper a non-Quaker could not do. But sometime by 1730 Day must have departed from the Society of Friends —voluntarily or otherwise — for in the 6 times he appeared in Court — to an inquest, or the swearing in as overseer of the poor (Quakers took care of their own poor without government help), or in serving as an elected official (a Quaker taboo), he took court oaths as noted "jur.", not the "aff." of the Quakers for these refused to take oaths on the Bible, staunchly insisting on being "affirmed", not sworn in the usual way.

Pioneer Christopher Day in Plumstead died, age 68. He had given a 10 perch square of land for a "graveyard forever" from an early purchased parcel, and he was the first to be buried there, March 6, 1748. What Day thought of son Joseph and his wife Dorothy's baptisms(Quakers do not baptize) and becoming members of the Welsh Baptist meeting house in Montgomery 5 years earlier is unknown, but it is recorded in his last will and testament of Sept. 1746 that son Joseph Day was to receive only £5 after his mother's death, an identical bequest also made to his younger siblings — Nathaniel, Abigail Poe and Ursula Fenton.

Only his 2 oldest sons — Christopher, jr. and Matthew received their patrimony of 50A of land each. It is believed that in his earlier days in Plumstead, Christopher Day, sr. accumulated considerable land; what happened to it is unstated in Bucks Co. history which usually goes into great detail describing every settler's landed estate — its acquisition, its perches, its deposition.

But it is interesting to observe how well Christopher Day, sr. provided for his "much beloved wife" — Martha. She was bequeathed the "mansion" (the homestead home) and the springhouse, and the household goods for life or for her widowhood, plus 2 cows and her riding horse with its side saddle. The will further stipulated that Christopher jr. was to pay his mother £3 annually, and to provide one-half of her firewood for life, with son Matthew

paying her £5 annually, and the other half of the firewood; he was also to take care of his mother's livestock.

Joseph Day and his brother Nathaniel were not included in their mother's care.

The Quakers of Plumstead had built a log meeting house in 1730, and replaced it with a stone one in 1752. It was used as a hospital during the American Revolution. Some Quakers, or their descent, took up arms.

Day's grandson John, b. 1742, was an Ensign in that War, and later an Indian spy. The Plumstead outlaws so feared by Mannesseh[2] Thomas that he hid pots of money in his stone walls were led by Moses of the English Quaker Doans; they also took up arms for their skullduggery. Moses was slain in a river side cabin by a Captain.

But it appears that some Day family members held to Quaker pacificism as can be seen in Bucks Co. militia records of 1775. Christopher's grandson, and the husbands of 2 granddaughters who married into the Quaker Michiner family were registered as "non-associators" in Plumstead, presumably men who did not join the militia, perhaps for religious reasons.

Joseph Day, Abigail's father, died during the American Revolution in 1781, age 61. Long before that time, his disgraced daughter Abigail had moved with her second husband, Philip Bitting, into a large and growing Philadelphia of 70,000, where anonymity offered sanctuary which was not possible at Hilltown Township with its 1000 inhabitants, all of whom were "their brother's keeper". In this colonial city, Abigail had 7 children by Bitting. In his 1831 manuscript, Rev. Mathias names 5 of them on page 43 — Lewis, Eleazar, Day, Abel, and Mary. T. Mathews' book reports that these children were worthy and respectable citizens.

Widowed again, Abigail returned to Hilltown to seek solace in the church. Its discipline showed that "heinous sins" [such as fornication, drunkenness, and heresies] were "not to be winked at", but if repented should be forgiven if the prodigal showed fruits of repentance. Abigail did so, for in 1800 she received baptism at the meeting house. Rev. Mathias' final comment read: "Abigail not deemed virtuous in her youth became it is truly

hoped penitent and reformed in life. She was baptized and joined the church at Hilltown, Feb., 1800. She died Oct. 6, 1811 [in Philadelphia] and was brought back to the Lower Meetinghouse and buried".

Thus she lived and thus she died — forgiven by the church but not forgotten by local historians whose works we have considered in detail.

William^3 Thomas (1748-1819)

Tax Collector

My family descent stems from the union of William^2 Thomas, jr. and Abigail Day in the person of their first born, William^3. We know that this son was apprenticed to the trades as stipulated in his father's will. He was a mason in Hilltown. By 1789 he sold off a portion of his patrimony, including the Elder Thomas' "mansion house" he had inherited, to land hungry Germans. The next year he lost the remainder of his land when Bucks County Sheriff Chapman seized it to pay the mason's debts, for William^3 was a fraudulent tax collector. He collected Hilltown taxes but did not deposit these monies in the public coffers. He pocketed them for personal use.

At 26, William^3 had married Mary Morgan on Jan. 29, 1774; their issue numbered 5. T. Mathews names only 4 of them — William^4, John^4, Martha^4, and Morgan^4. Their mother Mary died April 12, 1810. Their father William^3 lived 9 years longer, dying in nearby Doylestown Township — a poor man under a shadow indeed. Rev. Mathias gives more specific details. He wrote that "William^3 had a very handsome property left him and in his younger days considered himself and was considered by others as a pretty great man — he filled several minor offices — both civil and military; but through dissipation and neglect of business his property dwindled away and he died very poor March 28, 1819." Mathias named all 5 of his children — Morgan^4, William^4, John^4, Martha^4, and Mary^4.

William's^3 brother Joseph^3 (1750-1822), second son of William^2 jr. and Abigail Day, married Mary Kelly. They too were poor, "living in low circumstances"; they left no issue. Their sister Martha^3 did better. She married a Holland Dutch carpenter, Amos Vastine (originally Van de Woestyne). They lived on the 30A of land Martha inherited from her father, honest position and reformed in life. She was baptized and joined the church at Hilltown, Feb., 1800. She died Oct. 6, 1811 (in Philadelphia) and was brought back to the Lower Meetinghouse and buried".

Thus she lived and thus she died — forgiven by the church but not forgotten by local historians whose words we have considered in detail.

William² Thomas (1748-1810)

Tax Collector

My family descent stems from the union of William¹ Thomas, Jr. and Abigail Day in the person of their first born, William². We know that this son was apprenticed to the trades as stipulated in his father's will. He was a mason in Hilltown. By 1789 he sold off a portion of his patrimony, including the Elder Thomas' "mansion house" he had inherited, to one Gregory Harmany. The next year he lost the remainder of his land when Bucks County Sheriff Chapman seized it to pay the treasury debts, for William² was a delinquent tax collector. He collected Hilltown taxes but did not deposit these monies in the public coffers. He pocketed them for personal use.

At 26, William² had married Mary Morgan on Jan. 20, 1774; their issue numbered 9. T. Mathias named several of them — William³, John³, Hannah³ and Morgan³. Their mother Mary died April 12, 1816. Their father William² spent 6 years longer, dying in nearby Buckingham Township — a poor man, under a shadow, disgraced. Rev. Mathias gives more specific details. He knows that William² had a very handsome property left him and in his younger days prided himself and was considered by others as a pretty great man — he filled several minor offices — both civil and military, but through dissipation and neglect of business his property dwindled away and he died very poor March 28, 1810". Mathias named all 5 of his children — Morgan³, William³, John³, Martha³, and Mary³.

William²'s brother, Joseph² (1750-1827), second son of William¹ Jr. and Abigail Day, married Mary Kelly. They too were poor, "living in low circumstances"; they left no issue. Their sister Martha² did better. She married a [illegible] Baptist clergyman, Amos [illegible], [illegible] [illegible]. They lived on the 32 acres of land Martha inherited from her father.

William^3, jr. Mathews remarked that Martha was a discreet and prudent woman [unlike her mother Abigail Day], and also died in 1822, age 66. Her husband Amos then moved from Bucks Co. to Chester Co. to live with a daughter. He has been described as a kind husband and an industrious man, but "peculiar...not altogether agreeable".

By this time, the 3rd and 4th generations of Welsh were leaving the soil, selling their patrimonies to Germans only too eager to buy Welsh land for permanent occupance. Historian Battle observes that this generation of Welsh lacked the stability and tenacity for farming, preferring rather the trades, mercantile, or the professions. My records show, for example, that Thomas^2 Thomas' children and grandchildren held these occupations for livelihood — mason, carpenter, shoemaker, storekeeper, and schoolmaster.

Meanwhile the provisions of the Treaty of Paris of 1783 ending the American Revolution recognized the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, and their acquisition of a vast doman northward of the Ohio River to the Great Lakes known as the "Northwest Territory". From this was carved Ohio Territory. The new U.S. government surveyed it and opened its doors for settlement. The restive rushed in to displace the Indians and began life anew on a new frontier. Numerous members of the Welsh families descended from Elder William^1 Thomas were among these settlers. Ephraim^2's grandchildren emigrated to Ohio Territory as did those of Rev. John^2 Thomas. So did the descendants of their sister Gwently^2 Thomas Moore; these settled in Cincinnati.

William^3's son William^4 and wife Mary Stephens of Doylestown Township, Bucks Co., Pa — removed their family to the same river town; some of these became wealthy and moved on to the state capitol, Columbus. Two more sons of William^3 came West — John^4 and Morgan^4. Morgan^4 N. is found in the 1820 Federal Census of Butler County, Ohio.

Our family is descended from Morgan^4 Thomas, the cabinet maker. At this point we will narrate his story.

Morgan^4 N. Thomas (1781-1840/50)

Cabinet Maker

Our ancestor Morgan^4 N. Thomas was born to former tax collector William^3 and Mary Morgan Thomas of Hilltown, Bucks Co., Pa. in 1781. When but a lad his disgraced father had moved the family to Doylestown to pursue his trade as mason. Morgan, his brothers William and John and sister Mary (and perhaps a Martha) grew up here. Morgan would have been 31 in 1812 when he enlisted in Humphreys Regiment Riflemen of Bucks Co. As private he served his country as Ranger in its final war with England. Little is known of his military service in this War of 1812. The date of his marriage to Mary A. is unknown as is her surname; she may have been part Indian. Born in 1792, she was Morgan's junior by 12 years. They were married in Pa.

Morgan resided in Doylestown in 1814 when a petition to organize the township was drawn up and presented to the Court. One of the 37 signers was Morgan N. Thomas. Although that petition was not granted, the committee reworked it twice before the Court approved it on Mar. 4, 1819. Whether Morgan^4 signed this last document is unknown by the writer of this narrative. It is known that Morgan^4's father, mason William^3 died 24 days after the confirmation of the Doylestown petition; his mother Mary Morgan had passed on 9 years earlier.

By 1820 Morgan had relocated far from the shadow cast by his branch of the Thomas family tree. Joining the swelling tide of the westward movement, he may have migrated to Ohio soon after his daughter Mary's birth in Pa. in 1819. Federal Census of 1820 located him in Butler Co., Ohio, the county just north of Cincinnati where numerous descendents of Elder William^1 Thomas settled as already noted. Among these were Morgan^4's oldest brother, William^4 who died in Cincinnati.

Numerous Welsh families directly from Wales had settled in Butler Co. One was Rev. Thomas Thomas (no relation) who arrived in 1820, and preached to the Welsh in his house and schoolhouse, in wagon shop, or under a grove of sugar trees, wherever he could assemble a congregation

from among the 1600 settlers in Wayne Township. To support his family, Morgan^4 likely pursued his trade as cabinet maker. Earlier settlers had made crude furniture by hand from poles or from whatever came handy. Cradles were known to be fashioned from a wooden barrel sawn in half. But by the time Morgan^4 arrived in Wayne Township grist mills were in operation, and bridges spanned the creeks. Food tended to fewer game animals; pork was the staple. Now orchards produced fruit, sugar maples the sweetening. If settlers could now afford a cabinet maker, Morgan had access to black walnut trees plentiful on local hilltops. He may have had a shop to pursue his craft. We know our ancestor Elizabeth Thomas Gillet, born in Butler Co., was added to his family in 1824.

At age 49 Morgan^4 and his wife Mary A. had moved closer to the capitol of Columbus, Ohio — to Knox Co. The census of 1830 shows this couple now had 2 sons and 3 daughters all under age 16. Their residence was Middlebury Township in gently rolling country. Hardwood forests abounded. These had earlier provided logs for block house, school and home, but by this time the Methodist Church was frame while the Quaker meeting house was brick, still with plain doors. The Quakers were the first settlers. Their strict honesty made the Owl Creek Society highly respected; poverty was unknown among them for their industry was legendary. Lesser souls were held in less esteem. Delaware Indians still moved among the traces of the ancient Mound Builders. One white man out of orneriness shot an Indian woman in the hip. She lingered a few days, then died in an abandoned log cabin. The Knox Co. Court ordered public coffers to pay \$6.00 for her coffin. One of the boys who flung fall cabbages at doors (a Halloween custom) caught a provoked householder's bullet in his leg which had to be amputated causing death; the offender was acquitted. One eccentric here was highly regarded despite his coming to Owl Creek wrapped in a coffee sack complete with eye holes, and wearing a tin pot on his head — the renowned Johnny Appleseed, for he had planted apple seeds from his back pack along the creeks, so that settlers like the Thomases arriving later had pippins and cider for their pleasure. Johnny was last seen in Knox Co. in

1829.

The hardwood forests proved a boon to pioneers. One used a 12 foot diameter hollowed-out sycamore for his bedroom, but it went down in 1830. Sawmills now turned out lumber — maple and black walnut. Morgan^4 N. Thomas again had fine material for his craft to support his growing family. He would never know that one of his youngest sons, born in Knox Co. was destined to be the victim of wild Apaches over 2000 miles distant from Knox Co. — his son Freeman^6 Thomas, born 1832.

By 1840 the Morgan^4 N. Thomas family moved once again — to nearby Marlboro Township in Delaware Co., Ohio. The principal village was Norton. This area had been settled for some time. Brothers Joseph Gillet, a soldier of the American Revolution, and James from Connecticut, came in 1818-19. They felled trees, clearing only 7A year. Ox teams pulled up stumps and dragged logs for their cabins. The old soldier's son Herold attacked by wolves escaped their fangs by seeking refuge in an old cabin. Now wolves and wolf bounties were less common. The maple sugar camp had taken over the bee tree lined for sweetening for those first settlers. People now demanded furniture better than puncheon benches.

Morgan^4 N. Thomas may have finally purchased a Marlboro Township farm in the decade of the 1840's, for his widow Mary A., 58, and daughter Mary, 31, both illiterate, were found here as family #60 in the Ohio Census of 1850. Morgan is thought to have died in his 60s before 1850. Meanwhile his 21 year old daughter, our ancestor Elizabeth^5 Thomas, was married to the old Revolutionary soldier's grandson, Homer^{7}Gillet, age 31, on the last day of Dec., 1845; they lived as family #59 with 3 children on the adjacent farm in 1850. In fact, Mary A. Thomas' farm was surrounded by Gillet farms. Family #61 was headed by Homer's farmer Uncle Orasmus, on 50A, and the family #62 farm was owned by Homer's own mother, Susannah.

But before the next federal census of 1860 the young family of Homer and Elizabeth^5 Thomas Gillet would move, first to Missouri after they lost a 6 year old son to malaria, and then with 4 minor children — Freeman Zachary, (my great-grandfather) ← Wilson Price, Francis Marion, and Olive — moved on

to Ks. in 1859, in the days when that Territority was known nationwide as "Bleeding Kansas" due to border warfare waged between slave state Mo., and Ks. trying to come into the Union as a free state. Here, Elizabeth^5 Gillet, daughter of Morgan^4 N. Thomas, said to be of Welsh, French and Indian extraction, and pretty, petite and sloe-eyed would find her jet black hair had turned to silver long before her death in 1901. Her last frontier was lived on a farm on North Big Creek in Western Coffey County; Gridley was her Post Office, and here on a windswept grassy knoll was located Teachout Cemetery, her final resting place.

Elizabeth and Homer Gillet arrived in new Burlington only 4 years in existence, and in Jan., 1860 bought farm land on upper North Big Creek. Known as an "old timer" in Coffey Co., Homer likely built the standard log cabin, the stone fireplace, the puncheon benches. His oxen broke sod for the first corn crop. Life was hard; Elizabeth's equally so. Laundry done with washboard in a tub of creek water. In sunbonnet picking whatever the wild offered — plums and gooseberries, and sheep sorrel for pies. Biscuit and sorghum for the children. Their infant son Benjamin was destined to live only 12 years on Big Creek. Smallpox, drought, and prairie fire were a constant threat. Not the least among her anxieties were Indians from nearby Sac and Fox Agency, or Kaws and Osages in wickiup and wigwam encamped in woods by creeks. These little parties, usually enroute to the Plains for the buffalo hunt, noisily hooted and danced about the campfire but were more worrisome than Border Ruffians giving Ks. the "Bleeding" name; the guerillas never came close to the Gillet homestead. Indians did. Few had guns but they were armed with tomahawk and the bow and the braves were said to be more bothersome than dangerous. And many a brave even honestly paid for goods not bartered, though 4 moons had passed since the purchase on promise to pay. Most Indians seemed to hunger for settler grub — eerily appearing silently and suddenly beside the fireplace (they never knocked), begging biscuit. Or riding up to the pole barn with freshly-killed venison demanding to trade "buckey meat for hogey meat". They loved pork. And corn. Homer was to tell his grandchildren that several times Indians traded

him a pony for a sack of corn [being a small mildmannered man he was afraid not to "trade"], only to find out at daybreak the painted payment gone from his corral, for the cornfed brave returned in the night — an Indian giver! Homer could have used ponies, for having secured a government contract to pony express [not the Pony Express] mail from Burlington, he had his sons, including Freeman S Zachary, my great grandfather, to take turns in carrying the bags to El Dorado, a lonely 65 mile route across unsettled high prairies. And this worried Elizabeth — one never knew! All mothers became anxious as well when their husbands formed a caravan for the several day trip to Leavenworth and back. Herding their children to one neighbor's house they all sought protection in numbers until their men returned with major supplies for home and farm. This Elizabeth Gillet was known to regularly do when Homer went out with the supply party. By this time had she learned of her younger brother Freeman Thomas' shocking massacre, by a different kind of Indian — the wild savages of the desert west in "Arizona Territory"?

Elizabeth had at least 2 other brothers to come to the untamed West — Thompson and Frank. As settlers in Nebraska Territory they had harrowing Indian experiences as well, too close to their prairie ranch near Nebraska City. Their arrival date to this river port on the Missouri River is unknown but they could see it was busier than a hive of bees. Founded in 1854, it became in 4 years the headquarters of the government freight firm of **Russell, Majors and Waddell** who did huge business in supplying army stores for Fort Kearney on the Platte and other military posts in the West. The firm's numerous buildings warehoused military goods brought by steamboat to be transshipped in its 700 wagons by 6000 yoke of oxen manned by 1100 teamsters and other employees. The town also had a lively Underground Railroad system active in helping runaway slaves on to Canada. Ossawatomie John Brown hid them in a Nebraska City cave, and when safety permitted spirited them across the River to Tabor, Iowa to prepare them for the run up North. Kagi, the fighting abolitionist later slain with John Brown in the Harper's Ferry raid, lived here in 1855. And around its parameters skulked dusky Pawnees, Sioux and Cheyennes — some of them predatory.

Our Cousin Thelma was told by her guardian grandparents that Thompson and Frank Thomas one tragic day witnessed a party of Indians attack a wagon train only a few rods from the boundary of their ranch. Of the 24 men ambushed for their wagons only one escaped the massacre, and that because his horse ran off with him.

After a short stay on the soil, the brothers became stage drivers, as the Union Pacific Railroad had yet to make that mode of travel obsolete when it began operating in 1869. Somewhere along the line Thompson was killed by lightning. Frank quit staging to travel with the Van Amburgh Show, according to Cousin Thelma. I had never heard of it.1

Then one May day in Texas, I learned about this circus in an unexpected manner. I was in San Antonio with a friend to visit The Alamo. After "doing" the famous Mission , and then taking the riverboat ride complete with a tasty lunch in a Mexican café along the route, we decided to walk off some calories. Two short blocks south of The Alamo I suddenly halted in front of a small building that had seen better days. The sign read Hertzberg Circus Collection. I insisted on entering for a look-see. I saw not much money had gone into memorabilia, or anything else.

I asked the attendant if she had ever heard of the Van Amburgh Show. She had, and provided a vertical file, and a small book. The faded clippings introduced me to Isaac A. Van Amburgh, first animal trainer of note in America. A Bible student, he got the notion from the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den that man was meant to subdue wild animals. He began his trained animal show in the old Bowery Theater in N.Y. in 1833, operating it all over the U.S. for decades before dying in Philadelphia in 1865, but his name continued to be used by the Cooper Jackson Circus Co.merger in ~~in~~ its title until 1908.

For Isaac Van Amburgh on stage, his lion and lamb lay down side by side peaceably as a child entered their cage. In Europe, he gave a command performance of this act before Queen Victoria. In addition to this wonder, Americans delighted in his menagerie tent filled with gazelle and llama, cheetah and camel, rhino and leopard. Biblical paintings adorned their cages

— scenes of the death of Samson, the shipwreck of St. Paul.

The little book the attendant handed me was entitled Van Amburgh Circus Route Book 1871-79: "Journal", by W.C. Boyd, 1871. Penciled entries stated city and performance dates. The first was Connersville, Indiana, Apr. 13, 1871. I even found one entry for my hometown — Eureka, Ks., Oct. 13, 1877. Total miles traveled in 1877-78 season numbered 14,192.

But nowhere did I find Frank Thomas' name mentioned in file or book. Not a performer, he may have been a teamster of one of the "waggons" in the circus adorned with Biblical paintings such as "Jonah Ejected by the Whale", or "The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt" this show was known to possess.

But I hold no doubts of Cousin Thelma's family recollection that Elizabeth Thomas Gillet's brother Frank Thomas traveled with this show for 18 years. She was so right on other recalled family stories experienced long ago. She even gave me a list of her great-grandmother Elizabeth's siblings and spouses:

THOMPSON	THOMAS	married	OLIVE
FRANK	THOMAS	married	MERIA
FREEMAN	THOMAS	single	
MARY	THOMAS	married	MOSE BIGBY [I found this as Moses Bixby]
RACHEL	THOMAS	married	DON LAWRENCE[Betsy Woods said this family lived in Burlington, Ks.]
* ELIZABETH	THOMAS	married	HOMER GILLET

*This last couple of North Big Creek neighborhood in rural Coffey County, Ks. were our ancestors who provided us with the seeds of this story. My mother was born and raised 6 miles from their burial sites in Gridley, Ks. I once visited Teachout Cemetery to read their gravestone. The wind still blows chill on the grassy knoll as it always does in all the burial sites I have visited to honor our ancestors laid to rest — soft whispers of a time gone by.

PART II.

IN QUEST OF THE FREEMAN THOMAS MASSACRE BY APACHES, 1861

In Part I, the writer of this narrative promised to research and relate a more complete story of kinsman Freeman^5 Thomas said to have been slain on his Butterfield stagecoach route by Indians, tribe unknown. This skeletal tale was presented to me by my mother's first cousin, Thelma Hegwald of Calif. in 1985. Reared by Ks. grandparents and only 5 miles distant from great-grandparents mouldering in Teachout Cemetery, Thelma was closer to the story than any living other in her generation.

We have already seen that Freeman was the son of Morgan^4 N. Thomas, and the younger brother of my great-great-grandmother, Ks. settler Elizabeth^5 Thomas Gillet, wife of Homer^7. Her brother Freeman^5 was born in Knox Co., Ohio in 1832. His restive nature drove him 1600 miles or more farther west than his own parents had gone upon emigrating from Pa. to Ohio newly opened for settlement. Upon examining the federal census of Texas of 1860 I was to discover that Freeman, a bachelor of 28, lived in wild and wooly El Paso, Tx.

Cousin Thelma's key words in describing the Freeman Thomas story were "Butterfield stage driver from San Antonio", "Indian ambush", "Cottonwood Pass", "Arizona Territory". Not much to go on I realized after my return to Denver.

Back home I resumed my longtime research of my New England colonial ancestors. When I finally got around to the Freeman story, I began my research with "Cottonwood Pass". I located a gazetteer noting such a Pass (aka Sycamore Pass) in central Arizona. Further study showed Wells Fargo stages of the 1870's,carrying gold coin and bullion,raced mountain roads through Wickenburg and other agencies near a Cottonwood Pass in hopes of out-running Mexican bandits and American desperados disguised as Indians. In 1871 near Wickenburg such a notorious incident occurred. Yavapais (or, desperados) held up the stage, killing 5, including Dutch driver

Lentz, and a N.Y. Tribune reporter, Loring. But no Freeman Thomas.

Locating a late 1850's map of the Butterfield Overland Mail Route from St. Louis to San Francisco, I noted that Ks. extended to the Rockies at which point Utah Territory began and stretched to Calif., a U.S. state since 1850. The territories of Colorado. and Nevada did not exist, nor was there an Arizona Territory! Thus it appeared to me that the Freeman Thomas tragedy occurred after Feb. 24, 1863, the date Arizona was organized as a Territory.

But on this Butterfield stage route there was a Cottonwood (aka "Los Alamos") 18 miles north-west of Franklin, now El Paso. Located in a thick grove of cottonwoods, it was the only ranch in 1858 between El Paso and Fort Fillmore near Mesilla, New Mex. By 1860 it operated as "Los Tres Hermanos" by the 3 Mills brothers of Indiana, to serve the stage line as a station for speedy change of horses.

I could see that the Butterfield Overland Mail Stage came nowhere near Cottonwood Pass of what is now central Az. The western leg of this Line from El Paso to Tucson followed the Gila River across formidable deserts to Calif. Every 20 miles or so stage stations sported such names as Rough and Ready, Dragoon Springs, Murderers' Grave, Apache Pass, and Soldier's Farewell, a fair appraisal of danger experienced by those who passed that way.

Of these stage stops, Dragoon Springs in Az. piqued my interest, for television scenes often depicted a colorful cavalry (dragoons) riding stiffly from dingy desert forts to rescue wagon trains and their fair maidens besieged by Indian marauders. One late autumn day when en route to warmer San Diego in a friend's RV we stopped in Willcox, Az. to visit the Cochise Visitor Center and Museum. Perusing wall maps and glass cases of Old West memorabilia I read about James Tevis of nearby Fort Bowie. Later, I would learn much more of him as this story unfolded, for he figured in the Thomas massacre!

I also learned that another fort had been reconstructed only 9 miles south of Willcox. We made a quick side trip to Dragoon Springs — maybe I could get a clue in my Thomas story! Under cold leaden skies a scant

handful of visitors like ourselves strolled the site. But this place had history! Sure enough there was the Butterfield Stage Depot, — closed, for winter was upon us. The Dragoon and Chiracahua Mountains loomed darkly in the distance. Those heights had held the stronghold of Cochise, fierce Chiricahuan Apache chieftain of the Chokonen band from the 1850's. His father-in-law Mangas Coloradas led another Apache band roaming the Mimbres Mountains. And Cochise's son-in-law Geronimo led a different Apache band near the Upper Gila. I would not know until much later that all 3 chieftains were principals in the Apache War when stage driver Freeman Thomas and his 6 companions riding shotgun, were massacred in the fatal ambush of 1861.

Dragoon Springs was often besieged by Cochise's band bent on plunder and punishment of all whites considered foes. Hiding in nearby gullies and concealed under grass and soapweed, it was ever ready with bullet and arrow to slay man and steal beast, especially mules and horses.

My time at Dragoon Springs was chilled not only by the cold cutting short my stay, but by something almost surreal. I knew that 110 years earlier Cochise wrapped in scarlet blanket had been secretly buried with his favorite horse among the roughest and darkest rocks of the Chiracahuas at our backs in a place never revealed to white men. I had yet to learn of the sea of blood shed in this violent 19th century frontier — a carnage which indeed claimed the life of my kinsman Freeman Thomas, and that Cochise himself was central to the ambush!

In time when I finally located Freeman Thomas in El Paso, Tx census of 1860, I studied page 9 of that record with great interest. Our Freeman — listed as F. Thomas — was age 28, born in Ohio, and residing in dwelling 91. His personal estate amounted to $500.00. "F." was more abbreviated than I would have preferred, but 6 other male adult given names on that page also appeared as initials. I noted a dozen household heads — all male, all single (or, at least without wives present — common on raw frontiers) except for 2 merchant brothers — the Gilletts (no relation). Four single males had young "housekeepers", all from Mexico (El Paso del Norte — now Juarez — was just

across the Rio Grande); all bore Spanish surnames. F. Thomas' "housekeeper" was the youngest — 16 year old Guadalupe Apodaca. Also in his household was a Mexican cook, Jose', 40, and an Anglo clerk, John Thomas of Maine.

Occupation and birthplace of those on page 9 piqued my interest as well:— trader, Maine; 5 merchants from Mo., N.Y. and Ga.; 2 miners, Me. and Mo.; 2 carpenters, Ind. and Va.; 2 laborers — Pa. and Ala.; 3 stage company employees, Vt., N.H., N.Y.. Imagine my dismay to see that F. Thomas of Ohio was listed as El Paso grocer in 1860 (with a clerk in residence), his occupation indicated by the census taker's ditto marks, one line under number 90 householder, J.W. Cook, a grocer from Tennessee.

A tally of page 9 showed 12 hailed from the Northern states, 8 from the South, with the 6 servants and housekeepers from Mexico. This fact would become in only 11 months a swift sword of division when Texas formally seceded from the Union in 1861 to fly the flag of the Confederacy — a bitter schism I was to discover later which became a major factor in the massacre of Freeman Thomas and his party — all Unionists!

But F. Thomas a grocer in El Paso in 1860? What happened to Cousin Thelma's family story — "stage driver for Butterfield"? A perusal of pages 61-63 in this census listed 5 mail conduct~~ions~~ons, 17 stage drivers, and 1 stage keeper. Evidently El Paso was a major hub for the southern transcontinental stage mail routes in 1860, including the San Antonio - San Diego Mail Company.

I was also to discover later that householder #95 on page 9, Indiana surveyor Anson Mills (his "housekeeper" was Delores Gonzales, 18) was well known to Freeman Thomas. And he and his 2 brothers operated "Los Tres Hermanos", 18 miles out of El Paso referred to earlier, where the Butterfield stage stopped at their ranche (formerly known as "Los Alamos"; I.e. Cottonwood). Could this be the "Cottonwood Pass" in Thelma's story? Luckily, I discovered an autobiography written by one of these brothers — William M. Mills, Forty Years at El Paso, 1858-99. Would it mention Freeman Thomas? It did!

The discovery of Mills' book came at Santa Fe during one of my annual treks to the "City Different". For 20 consecutive years I visited the Santa Fe region with 3 schoolteacher travel companions — to see the Georgia O'Keefe gallery, and her home at Abiqui, ui and Maria de Popovi's incomparable black pottery at San Ildefonso, the Taos Pueblo and Kit Carson's home, the Chimayo Sanctuario, the Governors' Palace, La Fonda and St. Francis Cathedral — we were never bored.

But once I balked. No more unfired Mexican pottery at the Jackalope of Chaos for me! I went to the New Mexico State Archives instead — half-looking for Freeman Thomas in the Southwest.

Well, one never knew when a clue would crop up! One time I even considered the City of Rocks in New Mexico as a possibility. Successful in prying my travel-companion from poking among translucent Apache Tears in a Deming rock shop, we drove the Chevy 28 miles northwest to the City of Rocks State Park. We rambled out there among bizarre lava house-sized monoliths 50' high, spewed from volcanoes 35 million years earlier, in the unsought company of a family with spirited children. They soon sped on their way to somewhere else. Then the City of Rocks became deathly still — eerie even with its dark shadows and hollows whispering through red tuff narrow passageways grotesquely eroded by desert sand, wind and rain in the semblance of a battle-battered ancient village silent on a lunar landscape. It was a positively spooky place now with the children gone.

But what a hideout this place would make for highwaymen, robbers of a century past, and Indians equally long gone, bent on looting wagon train and stage if any came this way! The thought entered my mind — suppose Freeman Thomas' Indian ambush happened around here?   Naw!

Had I only known that day what I came to learn later — that the Overland Mail stages passed very close to the City of Rocks (about 10 miles) I would have shivered in earnest! Many times in my Southwest treks I had unknowingly crossed this very stage mail road on State Highway 26, half-way between Hatch and Deming. The stage station near this point was Cooke's Springs, only 18 miles northeast of what is now Deming. And only 2 miles

from these springs was Cooke's Canyon — a dark fateful trap to many a traveler. And that is where the massacre of Freeman Thomas and his 6 companions took place in July of 1861.

But to return to the State Archives at Santa Fe. In the card catalog for Tx. , Mills' autobiography *Forty Years at El Paso 1858-1898* leaped into view. It contained a wealth of information for my story — on Freeman and his companions, their times and troubles. Its early chapters described in rich detail the El Paso of 1858-61 — the milieu of our Freeman's short remaining years on earth.

It is not known when Freeman first came to lodge in El Paso — perhaps when the San Antonio leg of the stage route operated by proprietor George Giddings ceased to exist. Federal census shows Freeman here in 1860. The Mills Brothers — Will 22 and Anson 24 arrived Dec., 1858. Having joined a party of surveyors, temporarily stalled at the Tanks, the impatient youths walked the 26 miles afoot and alone in the dark into town, then called Franklin. By daybreak the hamlet appeared mostly mud, and Mexican in serapes. Spanish was the spoken language and the currency the Mexican silver dollar. There was a saloon but no hotel or bank. A system of *acequias* watered vineyards and stubbled fields of grain. The one cottonwood in the plaza sported a bulletin board for public notices. It was here after a few months in Franklin that Anson boldly posted his opinion of 3 named local citizens — "they were liars, etc.". No surprise that every man packed a gun! What were the Mills brothers, descendants of William Penn's colonial Quakers, doing on mean streets like this? Even Will admitted the town lacked spiritual guidance.

In 1858 Franklin (El Paso) was the terminus for two stage lines — the San Antonio and San Diego (*aka* the "Jackass Mail" because passengers crossing one 100 mile stretch of Calif. desert had to ride mules), and the Butterfield Overland Mail which made its 1600 mile run from St. Louis to San Francisco in 26 days. Several forts on mesquite plain and mountain protected the dangerous route. Fort Bliss and Fort Fillmore were two garrisons dependent on El Paso merchants for supplies. Will Mills' first job

was hauling locally milled flour and hard goods expensively freighted from Mo. in freight wagons drawn by 18 mules to forts and copper mines. Our Freeman Thomas' grocery would have been marketing freighted stores at the going price — nails 50¢ pound, coal oil $5 gallon, alcohol $8 gallon; sugar and coffee came from Port La Vaca, Tx. Will Mills, clerking later at another mercantile, sold his homemade wine for $200 per 40 gallon barrel.

In Franklin, Anson Mills obtained an appointment as surveyor. In Anson's own autobiography, My Story, appears a drawing of his "Plat of the Town of El Paso" surveyed by him in Feb. 1859, his second month in the hamlet. He met the challenge to build the town, which he managed to have renamed "El Paso". Streets were 70'-80' wide. On one of these, San Francisco Street, he built himself a $1000 home; Will built his on San Antonio Street. But the census of 1860 shows that our kinsman F. Thomas owned no real estate. Did his household with Guadalupe Apodaca occupy his mercantile, or perhaps did he rent living quarters in the handsome new stage station?

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company, receiving a new government contract to supply mail service westward, employed Anson to build the station on 2 acres to accommodate necessary buildings and corrals. Anson says in My Story that it was the Overland Mail Co. for whom he built the stage station; was it the same? Its 3' thick walls measured 20' high. A typical Mexican adobe structure, it sported a front arcade of 10 arches. Its 30 rooms surrounded a large courtyard. An 1870's photograph of this station completed in 1860 may be seen in Conklings' The Butterfield Overland Mail Route, plate 43. This leg of the line was operated by George H. Giddings whom we will consider in more detail later.

About this time Will and Anson purchased the Cottonwood Ranche, 18 miles up the road to serve as a stage stop for change of horses. They sent to Indiana for their younger brother Emmett to manage the station on the Santa Fe run which they then named for themselves — "Los Tres Hermanos".

Both Will's and Anson's autobiographies, Forty Years and My Story, supplied partial answers in my quest for better knowledge of Freeman

Thomas, a story told by his sister (my great-great grandmother Elizabeth Thomas Gillet, wife of Homer) before her death in 1901 at Gridley, Ks. Both Will and Anson wrote of their 19 year old brother Emmet's tragic death in 1861 in an Apache ambush of the stage wagon he seized for the flight to Calif. on the cusp of Texas' secession from the Union. They told Emmet's story from his point of view, but they did name his 6 companions all massacred with him, including Freeman Thomas, mail conductor and stage driver.

At last!

In scanning the account of horror, I quickly noted a footnote. Rex Strickland, who penned the Introduction and Notes in the 1962 reprint of Forty Years, freely admitted Will's stories were sometimes inaccurate, believing him to be fuzzy in memory when in old age he wrote the book. Deemed eccentric, he was known to binge on the bottle as well.

Disappointment! What was the truth? I meant to find out.

History of Apache Terror

To fully understand "The Freeman Massacre", as it came to be known, it is necessary to consider two precipitating factors in this tragedy: — (1. The history of Apache terror in the Southwest; (2. The significance of Texas Secession in 1861.

The first point we are making here is to show that the Apache had a culture and history of violence long before the "Bascom affair" in Feb. 1861. There is little doubt that a foolhardy blunder ordered by U.S. Lt. George Bascom greatly fueled an already blazing inferno.

That nefarious incident began Jan. 1861 with a ranche raid near Fort Buchanan with the theft of cattle, and the capture of a white boy named Felix Ward. Cochise's Apaches were blamed. Lt. Bascom, late of West Point and new to the West, and his dragoons searched for the lad.

Cochise, camped in winter quarters at nearby Apache Pass, was urged to come to the fort to parley. He came in with a small party which included his wife and child, his brother and two nephews. All stoutly denied having the Ward boy. Bascom detained the Apache party until Felix should be

returned. Cochise escaped by slitting the tent, but his relatives were seized to be held captive until the Ward boy was found.

Cochise assembled a large party of 500 warriors at Apache Pass which included bands led by Mangas Colorados and Geronimo, his kinsmen by marriage. Meanwhile, these Apaches seized a wagon train load of flour bound for a fort. Nine Mexican drivers and 4 Americans were captured. The Mexicans tied to wagon wheels were tortured and burned. For the Moment the Americans were spared to barter for Cochise's imprisoned family. War-painted, the Apaches prepared to fight Bascom.

Although a dozen Apaches were lost (and Geronimo recalled long afterwards several whites as well) and 42 mules were captured, the 4 American prisoners from the wagon train were slain and horribly mutilated by the Apaches and left exposed for the dragoons to consider warrior ferocity. But these corpses sealed the fate of Cochise's brother and nephews, for in brutal retaliation the Lieutenant had them hanged from an oak near Apache Pass. To an enraged Cochise this meant all-out war against white men — forever. Thus began in Oct. 1861 the bloody vengeance of the so-called Apache, or Cochise War. It was waged relentlessly while the corpses of his unburied kin turned to whitened skeletons. Fortunate for him, Lt. Bascom had mercifully released Cochise's wife, and boy Naiche destined to become Geronimo's sidekick in that warrior's long reign of terror.

But Congress knew in 1857 when granting the Butterfield Overland Line a charter to operate a government subsidized mail route from Mo. to Calif. that the El Paso-to-Yuma leg of the run spanned a country long held by hostile Apaches. The recent Mexican War proved that. Gen'l Kearney, guided by Kit Carson, pushing on to take Calif. after taking Santa Fe, knew it. Capt. Cooke with his Mormon Battalion of 340 forging a new wagon road to Calif. knew it. They met Apaches, among them the Mangas Colorado clan clad in Mexican cotton, Spanish speaking hostiles toting guns obtained in trade with Americans already settled on ranches and copper mines in New Mexico Territory. In 1846 trader Sam Magoffin and his girl-bride Susan, in crossing the waterless Jornado in their wagon caravan toward Paso del Norte,

knew it.

But few knew of their ancient history. The Apaches, like the Navajos of Athapaskan origins, had drifted down from Canada in the 1400's — to continue a nomadic existence on the mountainous deserts. Unlike Navajos, they engaged in extreme raiding and looting, terrorizing all in their path. In 1688 Fray Posado reported the Apaches were warring with a dozen or more other Indian tribes.

Some modern writers describe early Apache character as practically genteel — trained from infancy not to be quarrelsome or steal from friends or be unkind to them. And so they lived allegedly peaceful with others until 18th century Spaniards tried to conquer them, then exterminate them — and failing that — control them by luring them to camp at presidios for easy rations. This welfare system — cradle to grave dependency on Spanish largesse made them peaceful as long as corn on the cob and in the jug was at hand. When free rations were not forthcoming, this tribe ravished the land. Don Pedro Pino, officer at Santa Fe in 1812 during Spanish occupation, firmly believed the savage Comanche of the Plains honorable in comparison to Apache terrorists.

New Mexico Territory, settled by Indians 250 years before Anglo-Americans arrived to do the same, were called "Appacheria" by Spaniards like Coronado of the 16th century who came in search of gold. Onate found the Pueblo people relatively peaceful. But Apaches were wild, roaming deserts and mountains criss-crossed by Spanish cart roads to missions and mines, and bent on plunder. Americans, having won this territory and unwillingly its wild Indians from Mexico in war, quickly built forts to protect incoming white settlers, forts like Fort Fillmore near Mesilla, and only 50 miles southeast Fort Bliss at El Paso.

In 1848 one American in New Mex. after the Mexican War, John Cremony with a surveying party to determine the new U.S. boundary, came to know the Apaches well enough to write about his life among them. He met many — among them Mangas Coloradas at the copper mines — and had little good to report about any of them, recording baldly that they were the

"most villainous unmitigated rascals on earth" and that the land from Gila Bend to El Paso was "a continuous graveyard "due to their depredations.

Cremony charged their tribal character traits to defective childhood training — suspicion and extreme selfishness cultivated from birth. Among them torturing animals received adult approval. Vengeance was a virtue; thievery admired; mercy unknown. Worshippers of an Evil Spirit, they considered the murder of Mexicans and Americans honorable.

It is interesting to note here that Cremony's appraisal of this tribe, a dozen years before the Bascom affair, occurred reads much like Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture, published 1923 by Columbia University. Her research of the violent Dobu Dionysian culture in New Guinea became a classic in cultural studies; it was translated in 23 languages. Both Cremony and Benedict were keen observers on the scene. Unquestionably the Apaches were the Southwest terrorists of the 19th century. One modern cartographer called them the "Arabs of the New World".

When Mexico focused on the Texas Revolution of 1836 ending Gen'l Houston's San Jacinto defeat of Gen'l Santa Anna, Apaches took control of their traditional tribal territory in the Southwest in the absence of Mexican attention. The two peoples warred for years afterwards — with Apaches suing for peace a couple of times — but mostly they triumphed in their old ways, burning haciendas and driving off the cattle, capturing women and children leaving behind the corpses of their slaughtered men — all in the quest for rations no longer procurable from the weakened Mexican government. Inside the American borders they — sometimes high on mescal or whiskey — plundered wagon trains from El Paso to Santa Fe, and sacked miners at silver and copper mines until these were finally abandoned. They were always alert for booty to trade for wet goods and guns, and for ponies — the going bride-price for a mate.

Into this violent plundering culture rode stage driver and mail conductor Freeman Thomas and his 6 heavily armed companions. Their frontier was held in the iron grasp of the 6'4" giant Mangas Coloradas — "Roan Shirt" (read "Red Sleeves" for the American military uniform he

obtained, a frock coat worn wrong side out to display its scarlet lining, or "Bloody Sleeves" from his victims' blood on his garments), and his son-in-law Cochise, and Cochise's son-in-law Geronimo. As kin by marriage but leaders of different Apache bands, these often collaborated in their war parties, but raided separately as their economic needs arose. One of young Geronimo's Mexican raids successfully secured the bride-price for his first wife Alope as it demanded many ponies. The Freeman Thomas party would encounter the weapons of at least two of these raiders as it made its last stage run through Cooke's Canyon.

As early as the 1840's the Mexican government, weary of Apache raids, hired trader Kirker, an Irish immigrant living in Santa Fe, to take scalps instead of animal hides, and he did, killing 148 drunken Apaches at one of his whiskey parties. Three years later Chihuahuans also sought bounty hunters to slay Apaches, offering them 200 pesos per warrior scalp. When dragoons, come to New Mexico Territory to protect Americans bound for the Gold Rush, showed their strength near Las Cruces, the Apaches backed off but continued raiding Sonora.

After the 1853 Godsden Purchase costing U.S. President Pierce only 10 million, Yankee expansionists had to deal seriously with the Apache problem. Nevertheless some American settlers in search of a fresh start in a new land traded their guns and stores to Apaches for stolen Mexican cattle to stock their ranches. Two years later the U.S. persuaded some Apache bands to cede over a portion of this land. Not all chiefs signed the documents; Mangas Coloradas did not. He and Cochise continued their Mexican raids for horses and mules to trade along the Mimbres and Rio Grande for rifles and whiskey. Warriors gradually progressed from bow and arrow to musket to Sharp's rifles, and became increasingly more dangerous and powerful as Freeman Thomas and his companions were soon to find out as they raced their *stagecoach* through Apache held Cooke's Canyon.

There appears to be disagreement among writers as to the particular type of vehicle Thomas drove on his last run — was it a *stagecoach* or a *stage wagon*? Why the confusion?

In fact stagecoach lines running through the El Paso terminal all have a colorful if confusing history. Enterprising companies, obtaining government subsidized contracts to carry mail from Mo. to Calif., all too frequently won, and as regularly lost, those due to Apache threat, secession of Southwestern states and territories, and, finally, to the full scale eruption of a Civil War dividing the Union.

A brief history of the service should be noted here, especially that which may relate to Freeman Thomas' employment as stage driver.

In 1853 Birch's San Antonio-San Diego Mail Company (dubbed the "Jackass Mail") connected Tx. to Calif. Coach fare was $200.00, and for that money the passenger was obliged to quit the coach to cross a 100 mile stretch of desert astride a half-wild mule — half-wild because Indians stole 232 trained ones from the Company in one year. Hostlers would hitch up 6 of these blind-folded, and the coach would bolt on a dead run through chaparral to El Paso and beyond, loaded with 6 armed guards in the coach, and on the box the driver and the conductor, passengers limited to 30 pounds baggage, tools for shoeing and breakdowns, grub for the duration and pans to cook it. Water was obtainable in muddy ruts in the absence of water holes. Six hundred dollars in cash and 600 pounds of letters and newspapers and a parcel or two in the boot completed the load. A 24-hour watch was posted for Indian raiders and stage robbers prowling the route.

Apache leaders, realizing this Congress-backed American venture in mail delivery to cross their territory protected now by stage stations and garrisoned posts, shrewdly offered a truce, a trade off . Dragoon, don't interfere with Apache raid in Mexican states; Apache won't plunder the American trail to Calif. And they demanded U.S. government beef and flour rations; in turn, they would provision their stables with hay — for a price. With this arrangement the Apaches remained tolerably friendly for a period of time.

In 1858 merchant George H. Giddings became the legal heir to this "Jackass Mail". Reorganizing it, he headquartered his division at El Paso; it was familiarly called the "Giddings Line". His station was an old adobe house

filled with more merchandise than the mercantiles on main street. To protect his stock, clerks slept at the station until one was slashed to death as he slept. Indians were not accused for this attack.

This fairly describes Freeman Thomas' lifestyle as a stagecoach driver had he hired on with Giddings at an early date, which he likely did. October, 1858 the Giddings Line contract was nullified, lost to the Butterfield Overland Mail held in greater esteem by the government. Giddings' efforts to revive his Line were at first unsuccessful. This would have left his numerous employees, including Thomas, without employment unless he signed on with rival Butterfield Overland Mail. This may account for F. Thomas being a "grocer" in the El Paso census of 1860. He was between stage-driving jobs!

The Butterfield stage on its maiden run in 1858 probably arrived in El Paso on time. Rules of the road were exacting. A conductor's pocket watch was as important as his gun, for the Company regarded every minute virtually sacred. Compelled to strive for swiftest speed safely possible, he knew a 15 minute late start at every station along the way meant an extra day to add to the 26 days from Mo. to San Francisco.

Instructions to conductors, drivers, and station agents written by John Butterfield himself, were as numerous as they were strict. All employees were to guard and protect Company property, keep the mail dry and the records complete, see that fares were paid in advance, and that no passenger carried extra baggage above the allowable. All on the Line were to be constantly ready for duty and for any emergency; to keep a good lookout for Indians, but never speak to them or among them. The Conductor was held personally responsible for the safe delivery of the mail subsidized by the U.S. government.

Butterfield Overland Stage — with Henry Skillman El Paso agent — ceased operations in the Southwest in the spring of 1861 — short months before the Freeman Thomas Massacre. It then appears that merchant George Giddings tried to revive his old mail line once again, calling it the Overland Mail, not to be confused with the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. He set up his headquarters 80 miles west of El Paso at the old

village of Mesilla, New Mex. Loading his stage for the run, he handpicked 6 guards to get his mail through dangerous Apache territory. Freeman Thomas was not one of these, for Conkling believes Freeman and young Emmett Mills were hired by the Mesilla Agency as agents to operate the semi-monthly mail service. May 17, 1861, Giddings launched his first mail coach on its maiden run to Calif.

That same day Butterfield Mail bid farewell to its Mesilla station and pulled up stakes to move to Calif., with 100 employees, 200 animals, and 21 coaches and wagons hauling company stock. George Giddings, with Henry Skillman, followed that disappearing Butterfield caravan with 25 of his own employees and his own stock to replenish the stage stations along the same route formerly used by Butterfield. The Gidding's Line Mail coach with its driver and 6 armed guards in advance of the 2 caravans did not get far. At Stein's Station, Cochise's band took their lives and their guns, then still rampaging pushed ahead of both caravans to systematically destroy stations, 30 employees and equipment. They kept the Colts and Sharps' weapons to supplement their own bows and arrows.

When Giddings and Skillman in the caravan behind came upon each tragic scene, they could do little but bury the dead, and stare at the losses which plunged them further into debt. Later, Giddings employed attorney Thomas Mastin, a miner at Pinos Altos, to sue the government (he had a government contract for mail service) for damages amounting to $8355.00.

Only 63 days separated this mid-May Apache ambush with another ambush in July on Giddings' other employees, the Freeman Thomas party in Cooke's Canyon. Was Freeman on the regular mail run to Calif. as some claim, or was he, as Anson Mills reported, on a desperate flight with 6 other Unionists — including his brother Emmett, — with a load of rescued mail and company records with the intention of joining a military outfit in Calif. and returning with it to save El Paso from the Confederacy, as Anson Mills claimed? Anson, later a Brig.-General, treasured patriotism!

Emmett was 19 at the time. Anson was in the East enlisting in the Union Army and spent 4 years in the field. For decades thereafter he

pursued a military career — always a loyal Unionist despite his Tx. connection.

Secession of Texas and Southern New Mexico

King Cotton brought the nation to war — or least its hand labor method of production did, for the crop required cheap labor — slavery. Tons of cotton bales accounted for 2/3 of the total export trade to European markets.

The Cotton Kingdom now stretched from N.C. to Tx. The vast Southwest territory acquired in the Mexican War had produced a dreaded specter to the Union. Would more cotton states be created to upset the balance of power in Congress? Could Congress propose a *compromise*? It did in 1850, which had included the admission of Calif. as a *free* state. But in the remainder of the Mexican Cession, territorial governments were to be formed without restrictions as to slavery.

That proved to be a short truce! The nation, divided before Lincoln's election in Nov. 1860, openly split asunder soon after. In Feb. 1861 Jefferson Davis was elected President of the Confederacy in Alabama. A month later Abe Lincoln took the oath of office in Washington, D.C. to uphold the Union. By that date 7 states had already seceded *before* the inauguration — S.Car., Miss., Fla., Ala., Ga., Louisiana, and the last — Texas. Only Sam Houston and 7 other Texans at the Austin state convention voted *against* secession in 1861; they never let the world forget it! And perhaps Anson Mills during his long military career where he attained the rank of Brig. Gen'l never did either, for he admired Houston, whom he first met in 1857 at the little McKinney Mills school where he taught one term.

The Unionist Mills' brothers in El Paso in 1861 were opposed to slavery and secession. In *Forty Years* Will reported only 4 other townsmen voted with them when it came to a vote on Feb. 23. Within a fortnight Anson boarded the last stage east to go to Washington, D.C. to let the Secretary of War know that Confederates hugely outnumbered patriots in his region. Back there he enlisted and fought in the battles of Chickamanga, Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain.

Will Mills himself stayed in Tx. In his book he claims "he strove mightily" to promote the Union cause as dispatch courier, and to spy on rebel forces as U.S. army officers at Fort Bliss and Fort Fillmore near Mesilla, which had failed to stay with the Union: Once Will delivered a letter to a loyalist captain at Fort Fillmore (which did not surrender until Aug.). But in nearby Mesilla he found the Confederate flag already flying, and quickly learned Unionists were not welcomed in this town and should leave — and had better leave! At its convention of Mar. 16 voters illegally organized a Confederate territorial government comprised of the southern half of N. Mex. Territory, naming it "Arizona". (There was no legal Ariz. Terr. at that time, an act yet to be created by the U.S. Congress in June, 1862). Baylor became its Confederate governor. Upon learning this odd fact I suddenly realized how Cousin Thelma could report that our kinsman Freeman Thomas was slain by Indians in "Arizona Territory". For now this part of N.Mex.,where his massacre happened 4 months later,was indeed "Arizona", albeit illegally.

Will Mills' secret dispatch service soon aroused suspicion. Seized in Paso del Norte (Juarez, on neutral soil) where he spied on rebel troops garrisoned at Fort Bliss, he was shackled and thrown in the guard house, and threatened with execution. But just prior to his arrest, he had written his young brother Emmett in Mesilla warning him to take appropriate measures to protect himself from the fighting about to erupt in the Southwest,for the Colonel garrisoned at Santa Fe was determined to keep the stage lines open to Calif. and Utah Territories. This was vital to the U.S. Treasury for its coffers depended on western gold and silver shipments to finance the war, and postal service must be protected at all costs.

But Emmett was to be victim of the Apache War, not the Confederate. Before Will's release from Fort Bliss 1 month later, the Freeman Thomas party was massacred at Cooke's Canyon.

The Massacre in Cooke's Canyon

July 20-23, 1861

This story has been variously reported from beginning to end, depending on what work is read. While reports vary among its

contemporaries and its later commentators as to the Mail Line involved, the reason for the run, the location of the massacre, the discovery and burial of the bodies, Apache numbers in the ambush and their losses — all are in agreement as to the names of the actual victims that fateful July week in 1861 — if not in some of their personal details.

(1. Our kinsman Freeman Thomas, the subject of this narrative, now 29, was the mail conductor of this fatal run.

(2. John Portell was the stage driver. Two months earlier, May 17, the very day Butterfield left Mesilla for Calif. and the Giddings Line with its new mail contract moved into town, a blazing gun battle ensued on its busy streets. John Portell challenged Secessionist attorney Thomas J. Mastin of Pinos Altos. Firing 3 rounds, John inflicted a flesh wound in the lawer's left arm. His companion Crawford caught in the crossfile found his elbow shattered as well. Portell had a price put on his head. The Mesilla Times reported a $200. reward to anyone who would deliver John to the sheriff for his "wanton and unjustified attack".

(3. Emmett Mills, 19, earlier employed as stage mail clerk at the Los Tres Hermanos station at Cottonwood, had now hired on at the Mesilla stage as had Freeman Thomas, if we are to believe the Conklings.

(4. Joseph Roescher, 26, a German. [I located him on the 1860 El Paso census, age 21, as a stage conductor, born in Saxony.]

(5. John Wilson, a former station agent who in self-defense 18 months earlier had killed José — Cochise's Mexican slave and interpreter at Apache Pass, whereupon the chief assembled a large party to attack the station, and would have done so but for the arrival of Hayden's wagon train. With too many Apaches in the area, Hayden sent to the fort for Capt. Ewell and his dragoons to escort the freighter to his destination.

(6. Mat Champion and—

(7. Robert Aveline — nothing is known about them, other than the circumstances of their deaths.

The **Who** has been settled amicably enough, but the **What, Why, How, and Where** are subjects of some truth, more legends, and perhaps,

much speculation.

Brothers Will and Anson Mills should have agreed in details, but they did not. Will in *Forty Years* said brother Emmett, employed by the Overland Stage at Mesilla had come to Fort Fillmore in response to his warning letter, but learning of Will's arrest in El Paso went back to Mesilla with a getaway plan to flee to Calif. But Rex W. Strickland in penning the footnotes and appendices in the 1962 reprint of Mills' book throws further light on Will's account written in old age. He says that the Thomas party set off from Mesilla in a *purloined* Overland Mail coach (Giddings' Line) in an effort to reach Federal protection of Calif. troops loyal to the Union. Anson, a Brig. General when writing *My Story*, embellished the tale. He believed the 7 were zealous patriots and loyal employees of the Butterfield Company. Seizing one of the stages of that Line in El Paso, they fled with mail and records intending to join the military in Calif. and return with it to save El Paso for the Union!

William S. Oury, former San Antonio sheriff, had plenty to say about the Thomas Massacre in an article he wrote for the *Arizona Daily Star* in 1879, 18 years after the event. He reported that Thomas was the conductor of the mail party that left Mesilla, July 20, 1861. He made no mention of stage company or the "seized" coach. But he luridly detailed the massacre itself as we shall see.

Conkling and Conkling in their 3 volume work, *The Butterfield Overland Mail 1857-1869*, believed the 7 men, all Unionists, were endangered by their political enemies, the Secessionists, and wished to escape them. Obtaining a mail wagon in El Paso loaded with Company property, they started at night for the West Coast.

D.H. Couchman's 1988 Master's Thesis for New Mex. State University entitled "Cooke's Peak", which I read in the New Mex. Archives in Santa Fe, gives a different report on the massacre. He is the researcher who reported the Portell-Mastin gun fight in Mesilla. Couchman points out that the Conklings misinterpreted the massacre. The 7 were *not* Butterfield employees [recalled it had moved bag and baggage to Calif., May 17] but

rather were employees of Giddings Overland approved July 1 by the Confederate government. [We might note here that Giddings held to Secessionist views and according to Anson, later became a Confederate Colonel].

Evidence shows that Henry Skillman arrived in Mesilla June 10, 1861 with the very first delivery to Calif. on this Giddings Line. The second westbound mail stage left June 18, and got back to Mesilla June 27. It was likely that this was the identical stage Freeman Thomas outfitted 3 weeks later for his attempted run to Calif. Couchman believes the Thomas party rode off in the Giddings stage driven by John Portell and that it carried the regular mail on July 20. The Master's Thesis observes that "many stories have been written, some plausible and some outlandish" regarding the Freeman Thomas Massacre.

Let the reader be the judge.

Did the trip begin after dark, as Conkling alleges? If so, why? To escape duress under the cover of night; to separate their Union selves from hostile Secessionists? Was the stage seized in the dark as reported to spirit away patriots' fearing for their very lives, or stolen by wanted men"? Driver John Portell still had a $200.00 price on his head. Guard John Wilson had killed Cochise's interpreter-slave, 16 year old Jose'. Although Tevis, former agent at Apache Pass where the incident occurred, claimed Cochise declared it was a fair fight, the chief nevertheless quickly set to wreaking vengeance on that Agency.

But it was a July morning according to Sweeney that the 7 heavily armed men rode toward their rendezvous with death. But even to execute a regular mail run, why did they take such awful risks at this time? Every month that year had proved to be more treacherous than the last. Stage company employees, they certainly must have heard of every ambush and atrocity on the line.

They knew all about the Bascom affair of Feb., the battle launched by Cochise, Mangas, and Geronimo, and the hanging of Cochise's kin at Apache Pass which started his war of vengeance. They certainly knew that in March

Giddings' brother James took a party to Stein's Peak to parley with Cochise in hopes of pacifying him, and of the slaughter that ensued; how a lieutenant and his detail found scattered newspapers and mail and bodies, except that 2 of the party, including James himself, were found suspended head downward from a tree, their arms pinioned to the ground, heads dangling 18" above embers. They had been burned alive! Proprietor George Giddings had now lost 2 brothers to frontier violence — James, and earlier his physician brother slain in an El Paso street gun fight.

They must have heard that Cochise doubled his war party and attacked Fort Buchanan for its mules and cattle, and had heard that the Santa Fe garrison up north would send no troops to southern New Mex. for military protection.

In April, Pinos Altos was targeted. James Tevis, no longer Apache Pass agent, and his 2 partners operating gold arristas were captured. The partners were burned alive, but Tevis, made to stand on a bed of hot coals until his smoking boots and skin pulled away, was forced to walk miles to the whiskey celebration party. He escaped when an old Apache friend slipped him a horse and he was able to get back to Pinos Altos before the Apache celebrants sobered from the tiswan. Tevis knew Cochise well from the 1850's, more than any other white man. He described him as a 6' fine-looking Indian, arrow straight and intelligent, but he disliked him nonetheless. Another contemporary even recalled the chief was "dignified looking", but he never had the misfortune of warming his feet at one of Cochise's fires! Whether the 7 knew that by early July Cochise and his father-in-law Mangas Coloradas and son-in-law Geronimo had joined forces to deliberately drive out the white man can only be conjectured. Cooke's Peak had become their temporary headquarters in their attempt to cut off the Pinos Altos mines from Mesilla. And Cooke's Peak was on the Giddings route!

The Thomas party arrived at Cooke's Spring without trouble. This famous spring, marsh and nearby canyon about 20 miles north of present day Deming, offered sweet water and good grama grass for the many emigrants and soldiers who often camped here. The place was frequently ambushed,

For years, dragoons reported seeing many human bones and grave cairns about. Not until 1857-58 did the Jackass Mail and Butterfield line establish their stage station here.

The Conklings argue that the Thomas siege occurred at this Cooke's Springs station, although admitting their contact with Anson Mills revealed that the Brig.-General was unsure as to the exact place brother Emmett and his companions made their last stand. But in writing My Story, and later upon commissioning the engraved message on the memorial shaft erected in El Paso honoring "patriotic heroes" of the massacre, Anson went on record in print and on marble that Cooke's Springs was the site. His brother Will Mills in Forty Years concurred. But Strickland editing Will's autobiography placed the site 1 mile beyond the Springs, just before entry into Cooke's Canyon. Others place the site somewhere on a low ridge in between.

On the other hand, William Oury, the pioneer builder of Tucson, who penned the commemorative article recapitulating the tragedy of 1861 in the Arizona Daily Star' 1879, declares the site was in Cooke's Canyon, and captioned his article thusly. Couchman's M.A. thesis of 1988 agrees with the Cooke's Canyon location about 2 miles from Cooke's Springs, and baldly states "Conkling ... unfortunately made a complete misinterpretation of the location of the stage station and incorrectly attributed the men's last stand to have taken place there".

Perhaps the Bureau of Land Management - National Register of Historic Places — has the last word. In 1977 it concluded that "the low saddle near Massacre Peak was the site of the Freeman Thomas disaster". Massacre Peak, named for the tragedy, is entirely within the confines of Cooke's Canyon.

Conklings' argument that the massacre could have happened no place other than Cooke's Spring Station is based on 2 lines of reasoning. The 7 men could not possibly have held out against so many warriors for 3 days except from behind a formidable breastwork already in place. Although the station had been destroyed by Indians earlier, its broken ruins offered protection behind its 3' thick rock and adobe walls. Moreover, later

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It was 18 miles to the next station, Mimbres Springs, on the far side of Cooke's Canyon. Our party must have filled their canteens not knowing it was for the last time as their team watered before bolting into the dark narrow canyon. Their "stage" or "coach" frequently mentioned in written accounts was not the stagecoach of Western movies. It was rather a mail wagon correctly identified by both Conkling and Strickland. This would be the "celerity stage wagon" used exclusively in mountains and desert terrain on rough trails between Fort Smith, Arkansas and the California coast. Two rode the box as usual, but one of the interior seats lowered to provide a bed for an exhausted driver, or it could serve as an ambulance for the wounded.

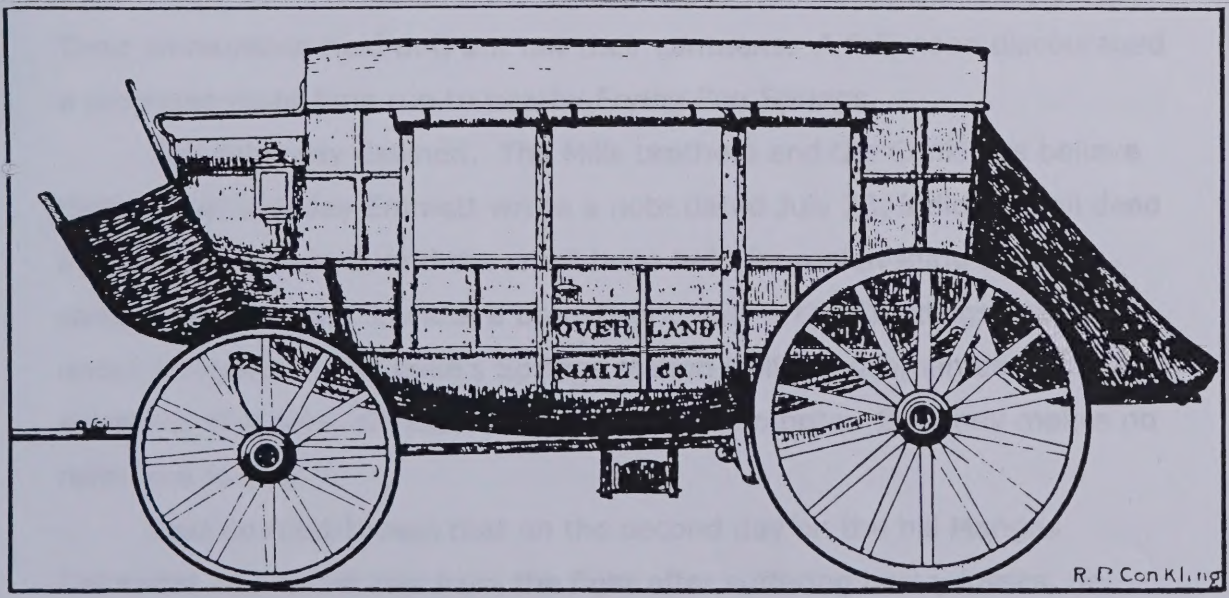
Conkling believes that the 7 Americans were making the run to California because they were the target of a political conspiracy (Union vs. Confederate), and that they were deliberately betrayed by their enemies to fall into the bloody hands of Mangas Coloradas waiting for them in Cooke's Canyon. Couchman and others would disagree with this supposition.

In the dark canyon the 7 must have been alert to danger. Without warning one of the huge boulders came alive, then another; bullets zinged. Freeman Thomas ordered driver John Portell to swing the stage wagon toward higher ground to a small bald hill to gain the advantage. From that position of defense Apaches would have to come out into the open to take them. Snatching up weapons and ammunition, Thomas sent the team and Wagon back down to the road in hopes warriors would plunder that and go away satisfied. They did not calculate the number concealed in the rocks. Of them all, only driver Portell had caught a bullet, a flesh wound. On the run they reached a ridge and under fire hastily slammed together a makeshift breastworks of slate slabs bound on the bald surface.

All historians are agreed that venerable Mangas Coloradas, "Roan Shirt", was in command of this ambush. In frock coat with the scarlet

sleeves, his 250 pound 6’4” frame could hardly be mistaken. It is not known if any of the 7 had seen him before but all knew him by reputation — none of it good.

Long time scourge of Sonora, Mangas’ annual winter raids in that State were legendary. With his young son-in-law Cochise to follow and learn extreme plundering, he had stolen much beef to supplement the often neglected semi-annual rations promised by the U.S. government. Many a war party he had led into Mexican villages for booty to trade; he boasted of his killings in these raids. In one expedition a decade earlier, his band had slain 111 Mexicans. Then only 3 years ago in a Sonoran raid he lost 2 of his own sons in the fight. Enraged, he swore to avenge their death by sending 300 Mexicans to eternal damnation. But of late he had focused on his own territory in the Mimbres-Mogollen mountains. Gold had been discovered by Anglos and his fury knew no bounds as gold-crazed miners poached “his land”. Once he tried to enter Pinos Altos to parley. Miners seized him, tied him to a tree and bullwhipped him. That sealed their fate — for Mangas vowed torture and death would be their portion by his own hand and that of Cochise’s, as had been done to their kin in the Bascom affair only 5 months earlier.



BUTTERFIELD "CELERITY" STAGE-WAGON , a mail wagon

This vehicle was designed in the coach factory of James Gould, at Albany, N. Y., where, in 1857, one hundred of these wagons were built and placed in the Overland Service in 1858. They were more adaptable to the rough mountain and desert country than the regular high bodied coach. The seats were not upholstered, but were so constructed that the backs could be lowered to make a bed permitting the passengers to take turns sleeping at night. This type of vehicle was used exclusively between Springfield, Missouri, or Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and Los Angeles, California.

Pagination
differs from this
pg. 65 thru p.90

Cochise, now in his prime, brought his Chokonen band to support Mangas Coloradas' plan to close off the road from Pinos Altos to Mesilla. He may have brought with him his eldest son Taza, now 19, the same age as Emmett Mills now firing from the breastwork on the hill. Cochise had been grooming Taza since childhood to take his place as chief of the Chokonens when the time came — teaching him the locations of hideouts and waterholes in their territory, and fighting skills to secure these for their band. Taza, like his grandfather Mangas, was tall and heavy in addition to having a good looking face and roman nose like his father.

The chief's number camped near Cooke's Peak is unknown. Estimates run from 60 to 500. Anglos who found the 7 corpses a few days after the ambush believed 100, based on their ability to "read" the scene. W.S. Oury, who was not an eye witness either, estimated 300 warriors surrounded the 7 from ravines and rocks below. Brig-General Anson Mills himself reported only "a large force of hostiles".

It is believed that the attack began toward evening. From their 2' high breastwork, the young men held the warriors at bay with well-placed shots. Firing ended at dark. During the night the men improved their "fort" — a 12' square enclosure, raising the slate walls to 3'.

Daybreak the firing re-commenced, and went on sporadically all day. Their ammunition held out, but not their canteens. A full moon discouraged a proposed night time run to nearby Frying Pan Springs.

The third day dawned. The Mills brothers and the Conklings believe that on that last day Emmett wrote a note dated July 23, indicating all dead or wounded except 2, and the small hope held for replenishing their canteens. He thrust it under a breastwork slab — the Conklings said it was under a stone on the Cooke's Springs station wall. Couchman doubts the existence of a note; Strickland said there was no note. Sweeney makes no reference to one.

Had Emmett known that on the second day on the hill Mangas Coloradas had withdrawn from the fight after suffering heavy losses, he might have taken heart. It remained for Mangas' son-in-law Cochise to finish

the fight on day three.

According to W.S. Oury by afternoon on day three the July sun beating down broiled heads and skins of those entrenched behind the breastworks. Their tongues were parched, and still bullets spanged from behind downhill boulders. A few warriors tried crawling on their bellies shielded by slate slabs held before them to snaked forward, but they were easily picked off upon lifting their banded heads above these shields to take aim. While it was still daylight Freeman Thomas asked for 2 volunteers to go with him to get water. Bob Aveline (Strickland says Mat Champion) and John Wilson volunteered. Collecting canteens, the party marched down the hill. Bob and John were shot before gaining the road.

In referring to Oury's article in the Arizona Daily Star of 1879 recapitulating the Thomas tragedy 18 years earlier, we must mention the Tucson sheriff and owner of Tanque Verde Ranch's reputation for inaccurate reporting was well known. Oury was not an eye witness but neither was any other Anglo who reported the story in that day, or commented on it thereafter.

While some of Oury's dispatched messages of Overland Trail incidents in 1861 are considered unreliable, there appears to be no dispute concerning some of his "facts". For example, in the case of Cochise's attack in the Bascom affair, eye-witness Geronimo's account is considered more reliable than Oury's version, for the Arizonian arrived at the scene 11 days after the hanging of Cochise's captive kin. But when the 4 American corpses of the shallowly buried victims were exhumed under the oak, Oury was able to identify the body of Wallace, a Butterfield employee, by the gold fillings in his teeth; no one questioned that. And when Cochise had captured Wallace alive he wanted to trade him to Lt. Bascom who held his kin in confinement until the captive Ward boy was safely returned. The Lieutenant refused to bargain. According to Oury's version of that parley, Bascom's Spanish speaking interpreter was Antonio — not the different person named in others' accounts. And no one took exception to Oury's version in that report. Again in May in the case of Cochise's ambush at Stein's Peak which resulted in the legs on day three.

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James Giddings being burned alive, Oury said the deed was done by Cochise, and 60 warriors, a detail not recorded by others nor was it disputed.

Regarding the final live scene of the 7 heroes in Cooke's Canyon, we will quote Oury as penned for the Arizona Daily Star. Reader be advised that Oury in this Star story clearly states his caption: "**Cook's Canyon. A Scene of Carnage — Enacted there in July, 1861**". By this he must have meant to translate into action information Cochise himself, as he claimed, told at Corallitos in Chihuahua where he went to sell his victims' booty. —

> ***"After repeated volleys, gallant Thomas is shot through both legs above the knee and falls to earth. His two companions are soon after stilled in death. Then follows the most sublime and heroic scene ever recorded in the annals of frontier warfare. Thomas, with both legs below the knee dragging after him, and moving upon the stumps firing at every step and his life blood smearing every stone in his path for more than forty feet, he thus drags himself along from where he first fell, and firing his gun until his last cartridge was gone, then taking out his six-shooter emptied it also, threw it at his foe and continued with stones until at last dispatched by the pitiless foe. The Indians, now aroused by madness by the determined resistance and their own great loss of life, rushed blindly upon the four men still remaining in the parapet. Prostrate with exertion and almost dead with thirst they defended themselves with that valor which never deserts the woodsman, until the last one is laid low in death. Thus ends the drama of Cook's canyon."***

At this point Oury answers the obvious question. If none lived to tell the tale, how do you know all this? He claims Cochise himself told the tale in Chihuahua, and that Cochise further said that with 25 such men he could whip the whole U.S.

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Edwin R. Sweeney in Cochise confirms that despite numerous casualties, both Cochise and Mangas' bore witness to the courage of the Americans in their last stand, and that Mangas, himself wounded in the fight, said he could whip the whole world with a few men as brave as these slain white man. I never read in any other source where these 2 Apaches ever lauded the courage of any other victims — other than the Thomas party. As to Mangas' "heavy losses" — Sweeney puts the count at 25 plus many more wounded.

Strickland reports that Mangas lost 40 before his day two departure, thus leaving Cochise to finish the battle. Oury exaggerates, writing that Cochise claimed a loss of 175 warriors at Cooke's Canyon.

None mentioned scattered papers or mail bags or company records around the plundered Thomas stage wagon as had been observed at Stein's Peak ambush of Overland agent James Giddings. Could it be the Thomas party was not on the regular mail run as Couchman claims, or as the Conklings believed in the seven's heroic attempt to protect the El Paso company property as alleged? Were these Unionists outnumbered in war times fleeing for Calif. federal protection as Will Mills claimed in Forty Years? Strickland concurs with Will, adding the stage wagon was stolen for the flight.

At Fort Bliss Will fumed in ball and chains in the guardhouse for the month of Emmett's massacre, only learning of it when a newspaper was flung through his prison window. In the army back East, brother Anson read of both Will's El Paso imprisonment, and Emmett's death in Cooke's Canyon in a New Orleans newspaper. Released from prison in August, Will visited the site of carnage, noting only a small tree nearby held numerous bullets. In his book, he said nothing more about the scene painful to behold. He did report that Daguerre (a well known freighter enroute from the copper mines to Mesilla) buried the fallen, and reported the death note penned by Emmett, dated July 23. Strickland in a footnote commented briefly that "bodies had been stripped but not mutilated and only two or three men scalped." Sweeney observes that Daguerre and Thibault were perhaps the first at the massacre scene a few days later. They reported that every body was stripped, the arms of most broken, and all 7 had bullet holes through the head. Sweeney quotes them further: "All about this wall the ground was strewn with battered bullets. Every rock and stone within many yards, which could have partially secreted an Indian, had bullets lying near. One small

tree, some 150 yards from the wall, had the marks of eleven balls in it." Later Anson Mills on the Mills monument in El Paso, and likewise the Conklings referred to the "mutilated bodies". And what we have learned thus far about the nature of Mangas and Cochise and Geronimo that treatment would not be unusual. Although reports have it that while Apaches rarely scalped they were not so reluctant to burn their foes alive, as we have already seen.

Who discovered the carnage, and mercifully buried the 7 victims on site? The Mesilla Times of Aug. 3 1861, reported that Daguerre and Thibault did; Will Mills concurred with Daguerre, at least. James Tevis in his autobiography Arizona in the Fifties said he helped bury them, after noting their eyes had been picked out by buzzards. If he did, no doubt he regarded the 7 as lucky to be slain outright on site instead of being captured as he had been to suffer burns in Cochise's torture-fires. Couchman reports that Tevis likely was in the burial party which Col. Baylor sent from Mesilla the 80 miles to the canyon. Confederate Baylor had taken Fort Bliss and imprisoned Will Mills as spy and then with 300 troops marched on to take Mesilla only to find it already flying the rebel flag, came into town only 2 days after the massacre of the Thomas party. When a mail rider delivered the news, the Colonel ordered an armed detail of 15 soldiers to bury the dead. It was a dangerous assignment as he well knew, for he himself had served as an Indian fighter of Texas Comanches.

Giddings' stage service was suspended by Congress Aug. 2, 1861, 10 days after the Thomas Massacre. This southern line was shifted N. to Nebraska as the Platte and S. Pass, Wyoming route proved safer.

And so the 7 were buried — it is believed in individual graves where they had fallen. Seven young men with families somewhere in the States to receive the word when U.S. stage mail service was restored after the Civil War.

When and where did Elizabeth Thomas Gillet, my great-great grandmother, get word that her brother Freeman, for whom she had named her second son — my great -grandfather Freeman Zachary Gillet whom I

remember well? *When* is not known to our family today, but *where* is. For Elizabeth and her husband Homer Gillet of Ohio with their 4 sons and 1 daughter had come into Kansas Territory in 1859, and in Jan. 1860 bought land in Coffey County. Here they were to live their own experiences with Indians along North Big Creek where they farmed, both frightening and frustrating but none with fatalities as was the case with brother Freeman Thomas and his 6 companions in New Mexico.

One may wonder as I do why Cochise chose to remain in the Thomas fight initiated by Mangas for a full day after his father-in-law, wounded in body and soul over the stupendous loss of 40 good warriors and the crippling of many others, quit the battle on the *second* day. I have not seen this subject addressed — a curious oversight to my way of thinking.

Cochise hardly would have kept up the furious firing for the promise of meager booty the 7 possessed — 14 Sharps and Colt weapons, 7 bullet pierced bloody outfits of clothing, little money to speak of and a few gold watches. His band already held possession of the ransacked stage wagon and its 6 mules. Any Sonoran raid or American ambush would have yielded more plunder in less time with fewer losses. In fact, only a month away from another attack in this very same canyon, Cochise and Geronimo with 200 warriors ambushed a large group of emigrating Americans, 57 of them known as the AKE party (which included Kit Carson's brother Moses said to have fought like a wild cat). They were fleeing Tucson for a safer territory for their livestock. The warriors streaming from the mountain sides soon drove off with a winter's supply of meat — 400 cattle and 900 sheep. But our little band of 7 behind the slate breastworks had had only paltry potential. Why did Cochise hold on, as these youths with deadly aim continued to pick off from their hilltop position Apache warriors half hidden among the boulders and ravines?

Was it for sheer revenge — to avenge the death of Cochise's Spanish interpreter Jose' slain by agent John Wilson, one of the 7 heroes? Eighteen months earlier Wilson had killed the Mexican captive boy Jose', which Tevis claimed was in self-defense. Had Cochise known John Wilson was aboard the

Thomas stage wagon? Probably not. Had he recognized Wilson as he sprang from the coach to race up the hill with the others to hastily build the slate breastwork? That is possible as he had known Wilson as station keeper at Apache Pass where his band winter camped. And he certainly would have recognized John in death, lying on the field of battle before being stripped and mutilated. According to Oury, Wilson was one of the volunteers to go with Freeman Thomas for water. Sweeney says John Wilson was found 150 yards away from the breastwork, the last to go down among the volunteers. Who could have possibly reported that but eye-witness Cochise himself who knew well the slayer of Jose'?

But why would it take these Apache warriors, outnumbering the 7 at least 20 to 1, three days to take them out? They could have rushed them en masse the first hour of the siege, and according to Oury finally did in their final hour on the third day. Cremony wrote that in his considerable experience with Apaches, the tribe never attacked unless assured of easy victory. What could have been easier than 7 young men — not even trained soldiers — with 14 weapons, but with ammunition in abundance, firing from behind a crude open fort on a bald hill?

Did Cochise fight on because of consuming rage bordering on madness? His eldest son Taza, the one groomed to take his place one day as chief of the Chokonen band, received wounds in that fight. This is known because a few days after the massacre, Cochise and wounded son showed up in Mexico at Janos to seek treatment, trading for it and the liquor and the ammunition (in short supply after the 3 day battle), and with the 7 victims' gold watches. Taza must have been wounded late in the Thomas ambush, shortly before the rush to take them all down. Or, it could have been earlier, for Cochise could have been trying to work on his wounded son the magic of his "medicine power", a power he claimed to possess and one he was teaching Taza. But while in Mexico trading and liquoring up, Cochise attested to the bravery of the 7 young Americans held 3 days in his gunsights, and declared that if he had 25 such warriors he could take the entire U.S. It is known that all his days Cochise admired physical endurance and bravery,

wherever he encountered it.

And he did, in Cooke's Canyon, July 21-23, 1861.

Could it be that the most plausible reason that Cochise chose to continue fighting the doomed men for a third day was an opportunity to show scion Taza an example of an American style Alamo-like *siege*? A Sonoran raid had meant a lightning strike, looting in double time, and riding off with plunder on the fastest horse available. Was not this long-drawn-out scene in Cooke's Canyon a lesson in raw courage? How highly prized personal courage was to Cochise can be seen in his high regard for his *one* white friend, mail conductor Tom Jefford, come to him with a plea and a plan. In an effort to secure a truce if not a lasting peace with the chief, Jefford walked into his dangerous Dragoon Mountain stronghold — alone, displaying not a trace of fear although Apaches had killed 14 of his mail riders. This lawyer-trader, and the Apache chief spent 2-3 days in parley. Cochise's admiration of this white man's bravery in personally facing him in his hideout in that initial visit began an unusual friendship lasting more than a decade. Only Jefford of all white men was permitted to know the exact location of Cochise's secret burial in the Dragoons.

The brave seven's courage, however, had not been weakened by superstition. In the Sonoran raid sheet terror of Apaches had worked wonders. In earlier days Apaches capitalized on their power to terrorize. Cremony wrote that the superstitious Mexicans trembled at the very sight of Apaches, believing them to be not human at all, but ogres, and therefore not to be reckoned with or fought. Thus terrified they were relatively easy to plunder, torture and slaughter. In Mangas Coloradas' youthful day Apaches made themselves more hideous looking by plucking out their eyebrows and eyelashes, according to Cremony. Their unusual appearance together with their long hair whipping in the wind created by the horse rout served to weaken Mexican resistance.

The Apaches themselves thought they were more powerful than they actually were, believing themselves invincible and their foes weak, a notion which proved untrue in the Cooke's Canyon ambush. When Spain lost its

colony in the New World, Apache raids became so successful that some villages emptied, mines were abandoned, haciendas and fields were forsaken. Apaches did not realize that Sonoran weakness was due to the political instability of the new nation Mexico, cash-poor and crushed by Santa Anna's military dictatorship. The American desire for Southwest expansion and the Alamo of the 1830's and the Mexican War of the 1840's left states Sonora and Chihuahua vulnerable to Apache depredations and unable to combat them without adequately garrisoned presidios. Similarly, Cochise's successful war in New Mexico Territory was partly due to American focus on the Civil War which drained it of dragoons for Southwest protection. Mangas and Cochise supposed their spectacular successes were entirely due to their joint effort to drive the whites from "their territory".

It is believed that Mangas Coloradas was also wounded at the Cooke's Canyon massacre of the Freeman Thomas party; details are lacking. But it is known that almost exactly one year from the July date of that massacre he was seriously wounded in attacking Capt. John C. Cremony's (author of My Life Among the Apaches) 21 government wagon train near the abandoned station at Apache Pass. One of his dragoons aimed his carbine at Mangas and shot him off his horse. Badly hurt, Mangas was taken to Janos where a Mexican doctor saved his life.

Mangas, age 70 in Jan. 1863 and weary of war, returned to Pinos Altos, requesting peace with the Confederate military occupational force with which he and Cochise had engaged in a major battle at Apache Pass when the soldier's carbine ended the chief's fighting career. The story is told that Brig-General Carleton of the Calif. Volunteers in the area to take back Arizona and New Mexico for the Union was en route to Mesilla Valley with 2000 troops. When the Apaches ambushed them at Apache Springs, the army rallied to use their newly issued howitzers to good advantage. Carleton ordered his officers to reject all offers of truce by white flag, and to kill all Apache males wherever found.

Carleton was not the only army officer to promote genocide in New Mexico. Col. Baylor, now Confederate Governor of the Territory, gave similar

orders to Captain Thomas J. Mastin of the Arizona Guards at Pinos Altos, commanding him to rout Indians from Apache Peak and to keep that road open to Tucson. The governor let it be known that Mastin was to exterminate them if necessary — by bullet, poison or whiskey — whatever. Mastin did not live long enough to do much. Two months after John Portell~~,~~ who had gunned down attorney Mastin in the Mesilla street fight~~,~~ and had gone down to his own death in the Freeman Thomas massacre, Capt. Mastin himself was mortally wounded in an Apache attack at Pinos Altos led by Mangas and Cochise and Geronimo with 200 warriors forcing miners to abandon the mines.

When Mangas requested peace he, in good faith against the advice of fellow tribesmen, went into Pinos Altos to parley. Seized by soldiers, he was killed while trying to escape — military euphemism for saying he was "executed".

Thus Mangas Coloradas' life ended on his own home turf. In his outlandish frockcoat with the red sleeves, he had led many a Mexican raid for the finest of stolen horses; in traditional Apache garb ambushed many a wagon train, looted many a stage as that driven by the Thomas party, leaving myriads of rock cairns supporting cottonwood crosses down his every road.

He may not have been properly buried as those in the cairns. But he was deeply mourned by his Chihennes and by Cochise who knew him as father-in-law and mentor, and both shackled by their economy requiring raids for a livelihood in sparse desert mountains, nowhere near the ubiquitous buffalo herds of the Great Plains to provide food and shelter to which other tribes had bountiful access.

It is believed an army surgeon cut off Mangas' head and boiled off its flesh in a black pot in order to sell his skull to a phrenologist who liked to compare it to the head of Daniel Webster. Mangas Coloradas' head was larger, and by speculation of the day, "brainier". It was reportedly used as a lecture exhibit.

The Civil War and Indian Unrest

This narrative would be incomplete without shadowing Cochise and Geronimo to their relatively tranquil demise compared to that inflicted on the Freeman Thomas party in Cooke's Canyon in 1861. They lived until 1874 and 1909 as wards of the Great White Father, although their familiar names remained household words well into the 20th century as the Apache War continued until 1885 , when Geronimo surrendered for the final time.

As the North and South conflict in the East focused on Antietam and Shiloh leaving the trans-Mississippi West without adequate federal protection, Indians, taking advantage of this inattention, attempted to right the wrongs done to them with a general uprising. One year after the Rebels fired on Fort Sumter in S. Carolina, Gen. Henry Sibley brought another war to New Mexico — the Civil War — with his 4000 Texan troops. He hoped to take Albuquerque and Santa Fe for the Confederacy, and did so without great loss. Then he met his Waterloo at Glorietta Pass in the mountains 18 miles east of Santa Fe. Here he engaged the Colorado Volunteers determined to stop him from marching on to Denver. While tactically defeating them in the field, Sibley came to ruin as Col. Chivington's troops captured his supply wagons. Unable to continue without supplies, Sibley retreated back down the Rio Grande to return to Texas with only 1500 troops. The remainder had surrendered, or fled toward Calif. only to fall into the hands of Apaches and other Indians. Thus ended that war in New Mexico and Arizona, but not the Indian war.

The infamous Chivington massacre at Sand Creek on the prairies west of Denver the following year fed the fires of a general uprising of the Plans Indians. It gained momentum when Colorado Gov. John Evans, a West Point graduate, and John Chivington, the Glorietta hero unsuccessful in obtaining a military commission in the East, held political ambitions to go into Congress when Colorado gained statehood. Popular support might be forthcoming if dangerous Indians could be subdued so that the local citizens could live in safety and with table food imported from Missouri. ~~Of~~ Summers Arapahoes and Cheyennes regularly ambushed wagon trains bound for Denver; winters

they came to agency forts to stack their arms, camp and enjoy government rations until grass greened again and they resumed their nomadic predatory roaming.

Denver, a mining supply town, had few farmers to feed it. In 1863 burned wagon trains deprived Denver of precious flour shipments, hiking the price out of reach. Bread scarce, the town feared starvation. The massacre of a local family provided the springboard for attacking the Indians. The Hungates' mutilated bodies put out on public display in Denver quickly swelled the number of Colorado Thirdsters eager to bring down the price of flour and up the ante of holding on to their own scalps. Setting out in November snow, the mounted volunteer rag-tag half-drunken army vanquished in a day long "battle" at Sand Creek — under the white flag of truce it is alleged — 175 largely unarmed Cheyennes, mostly women and children as their braves had gone out on a hunting expedition. The troops' repulsive display of severed Indian genitals on saddle horns in Denver's victory parade disgusted too few citizens for now freighted stores would be affordable, and their scalps to which they felt attached safe for the duration of a national civil war fought largely in the East.

Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle and his surviving remnant fled south to Oklahoma for protection. Chivington, narrowly escaping court martial at his federal military trial for heinous misconduct, was ruined for life, and in death as well as it turned out. Almost 4 years to the day of the Sand Creek massacre, Chief Black Kettle and his people were slain in the Battle of the Washita in their village by the celebrated Indian fighter Gen'l George Custer, a West Point graduate as was Gov. Evans of Colorado. Neither received government reprimand for their efforts in sending troublesome Indians on to their Happy Hunting Ground. Col. Chivington, formerly a Denver pastor, had surrendered his Methodist pulpit for a fighting commission (not a praying commission as expected, a chaplaincy) to serve the Union in a 3-day battle waged against Sibley at Glorietta, for which he received a brief hero's welcome. Not a West Point graduate to receive its coveted protection, he remains to this day a disgrace and an embarrassment in Colo. history for the

Sand Creek holocaust.

In an aside, I had a young neighbor living in the cabin next to mine in the Rockies. She once shamefacedly confessed to being the great-granddaughter of John Chivington, the Sand Creek monster. Had I heard of him? Of course, for I had done a considerable study of him at the Iliff Seminary library for a history project. She was surprised that I did not villify him as Coloradoans invariably do, many maliciously gloating that this Christian preacher could leave such a wretched legacy. While admitting there is absolutely no excuse for the Colonel's not controlling the rage of his half drunken untrained volunteers, I did explain to the neighbor the unfortunate circumstances of the times and the Denver public support for the attack, details about which she knew nothing although a magna cum laude graduate from Denver University in the field of cultural anthropology. We remained friends for years.

The Sand Creek massacre, which shocked a nation itself embroiled in the ravages of Civil War, escalated a 15 year general uprising of Indians attended by ruthless efforts to put them down on government appointed Reservations, or to kill them outright either by sword or wanton slaughter of buffalo to starve them to death. Thus we see Washita, Spotted Tail's surrender, and Custer's Last Stand. Government forts sought to control the "unimprovable breed", and failed. If Reservations could not solve the problem, then genocide would: "a good Indian is a dead Indian" was the mantra of the day.

Protestant reformers in Eastern churches from 1850s to 1870s earnestly believed Indian survival depended on change — convert them twice — once, to Christianity which included abandonment of heathen cultural practices; second, to persuade them to accept "civilization", I.e. education, land allotment, and an agrarian economy.

By the time of the U.S. centennial of 1876 — most Indians were subdued, either by Reservation isolation, or by adaptation. But not all Apaches of N. Mexico and Arizona territories — both 3 decades short of statehood. True, most Apache bands had surrendered to Reservation

residency — including Cochise's Chiracahuans — but not the people of Geronimo, and Cochise's son Naiche, as handsome and rebellious as his father. But it is not to be assumed that Cochise was truly a man of peace, even on the Reservation.

Cochise was to live a dozen years after the death of Mangas Coloradas, most of them as renegade and robber. To avenge the treacherous murder of Mangas in 1863, he captured a Lieutenant invading his territory and cut out his heart, which act defined the nature of his brutal warfare for years to come. By now he was ready to challenge the U.S. army and all their howitzers. When not actually fighting, this specially targeted Chief Cochise, the American troops scoured his haunts and secret strongholds with orders to shoot him and his band down like beasts. From a lifetime of victimizing the weak, Cochise now was the victim, but he gave them as good as he got. "We are about even", he told negotiators in the 1870's when at last he considered a peace settlement. By that time he packed a brace of ivory-handled revolvers and a gold chain formerly belong to Lord knew whom. But his face remained defiantly painted for war. But he was worn down by howitzers, and he bore scars to show for their superior power. He said his horses were thin, his band dwindling in numbers, and he grudgingly made an offer.

Peace came neither easily nor suddenly. He changed his mind several times in the months to come. Finally his one white friend, Tom Jefford, convinced him to end the long war. Cochise knew that meant Reservation, or extermination. When Army brass offered him one of 6 choices for an Apache Reservation, he rejected them all, and went into hiding. Hounded, he called for a Chokanen pow-wow. They needed an impregnable stronghold in rugged terrain and a clear path to Sonoran raiding. Army negotiators agreed to his choice, a 55 mile span of the Chiracahuas. He told them, "My people like to run around like the coyote; they don't want to be put in a corral." When the peace pact was finalized, he spoke: "Now the white man and the Apache will drink the same water, eat the same bread, and be at peace."

Cochise's pledge to keep his Chokanens on the Reservation was not entirely honored. Government rations were slow in coming and scanty to

boot. He ordered his ablest braves to continue the Sonoran raids and loot the Mexicans for the good of the Chokanens band. Meanwhile his lone trusted white friend, Tom Jeffards, was appointed head of the Chiracahuas Agency. This friend illegally and surreptitiously supplied the crippled chief with ample liquor to comfort him in old age.

Cochise failed rapidly in 1874; it is thought from stomach cancer. He had time to make Taza, his eldest son, his successor. Unfortunately, 2 years later Taza was dead also. He had gone to Washington D.C. to speak with the Great White Father, another warrior of great fame — President Ulysses S. Grant, and unexpectedly died of pneumonia in that city.

Jeffords often visited the old chief on his death bed. Cochise's last words to the agent assured him that good friends would meet up in the sky. According to custom Apaches burned their clothes and blankets at the grave site of their dead. Jeffords, the lone white man, watched these go up in smoke. Neither he nor any of the clan ever revealed the burial site where Cochise, accompanied by his favorite horse, dog and gun, was laid to rest in an unidentified chasm deep in the fastness of the Chiracahuas where the highly prized acorns and pinon nuts could be gathered for winter stores on sunny autumn days.

Geronimo and the Ironic Change in the American Attitude Toward Apaches

Acorns and pinon nuts — it was particularly this bounty of nature which induced Geronimo to stay put at Fort Sill, or at least render him more resigned. This made the Oklahoma Cavalry post, where imprisoned Apaches were assigned, seem more like home than had Florida's Fort Pickens and Alabama's Mt. Vernon Barracks — abandoned posts the War Dept. first sent them to as P.O.W.s. At least the Lawton hills produced nut-bearing oaks and pinons.

When visiting my uncle at Lawton in 1985 to share some newly researched family history with him, I knew that Geronimo, considered the last of the incorrigible Apaches, had been condemned to spend his last days imprisoned at Fort Sill, but I did not know its location. Uncle Lloyd, frustrated

with burgeoning Los Angeles, had moved his family of wife and 3 children to Lawton to invest in some fast food franchises, and eventually put his children into the 3 businesses as managers.

The year prior to my visit, Uncle had been chosen to portray the character of Apostle "Doubting" Thomas (which suited him to a T, he confessed) in Lawton's celebrated Annual Easter Passion Play performed before thousands in a countryside natural bowl as big as all outdoors. He drove me out to see the setting — the green hills of the "Holy Land" and the redstone "Jerusalem". While meandering the grounds he mentioned that Geronimo, with pardonable pride, I thought — lived here and raised cattle for the Cavalry post. Honored? I could not imagine why!

Later, I was to learn more history about the notorious renegade of Arizona, still a territory in his lifetime.

Geronimo had indeed become a kind of national celebrity the last decade of his surprisingly long life considering the reckless and defiant way he lived it. From Oklahoma he had become an exhibit of curiosity at the NY Buffalo Exposition when President McKinley was assassinated there by deluded Leon Czolgosz in 1901. He went on to represent an aboriginal Indian culture at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, and was even invited to ride his favorite pony in Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade in Wash., D.C. in 1905. In short, the War Dept. allowed him to go into "show business" — under close supervision, of course, for he was adept at escaping as his several "surrenders" to army brass show. When he died in 1909, Fort Sill gave the troops a half-day off to attend Geronimo's funeral!

In concluding this narrative we will attempt to explore the radical change in American attitudes toward, and even a kind of curious acceptance of this particular Apache appearing in our family narrative — the notoriously wild and greatly feared renegade of one generation earlier. Much of my information has been gleaned from the pages of Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place by Angie Debo, fourth printing, 1986.

At the time of my visit with my paternal uncle at Lawton, I had no notion whatsoever that Geronimo played any part in the Freeman Thomas

massacre which had grieved my matrilineal family in Ks. in the 1860's. On this point I cannot assume that Geronimo was actually on the scene at Cooke's Canyon on July 21-23, 1861, when the Thomas party made its last stand, but he was around and about the scene just before and after that event. The reader may recall that Geronimo of the Chiricahua Bedonkohes allied himself with Mangas Coloradas in 1860, and as early as 1858 with Cochise in the Mexican raids. It is known all 3 leaders engaged in the bloody scene of the Bascom affair of Feb. 1861 when an overzealous army lieutenant hanged Cochise's captive kin thus precipitating the long Apache War — for Mangas 18 months, for Cochise one full decade, for Geronimo 25 years. Cooke's Peak became their first temporary headquarters and here in just 2 years — 1861-63 — they succeeded in slaying over 100 white "trespassers", including the Thomas party being among the first. In August after the massacre Geronimo with Cochise and Mangas in the AKE ambush made off with hundreds of livestock. In September they attacked Pinos Altas miners where Captain Thomas Mastin was mortally wounded; casualties were heavy. Remarks made and recorded by Geronimo in old age at Fort Sill never alluded to the Thomas massacre, but for that matter he failed to mention other ambushes tradition charges to his account. If the alleged numbers ranged from 60 to 500 in the attack of the Thomas party, the smaller number would exclude most of the clan's warriors.

After Mangas' death in 1863, Cochise and Geronimo continued the war, boldly pillaging and killing the whites, and finally the Forts themselves. The army built Fort Cummings within Cooke's Canyon. Two years after Cochise's death in 1874, his Apache clan the Chokonens was forcibly transferred from their beloved Chiracahuas to the new Reservation 100 miles east of Phoenix — the hated San Carlos. Geronimo and Cochise's son Naiche did not remain long in this crowded place. They bolted to freedom most familiar to them — the Apache raid for revenge and profits both in Mexico and America. They led a small band of 40 renegades.

President Grant set up a Board of Commissioners in hopes of securing peace with the Apaches — to get them to try cattle ranching. Then the

discovery of gold and silver reduced the size of San Carlos 5 different times to accommodate miner and rancher greed. Combined clans fled to Sierra Madres rocks to take on U.S. Cavalry howitzers. Running short of ammunition they flung rocks. Recognizing Geronimo as ring leader, Gen. Nelson Miles fielded 5000 troops to take him, (25% of the U.S. Army), for this renegade now was the scapegoat for all Apache transgressions. The military believed if they could only hang Geronimo, the Apache problem would be solved.

Over the years tribal decimation of his people fell from 2500 to 500. Faced with dwindling numbers, uncaptured Geronimo 4 times had voluntarily "surrendered" to the military brass, but restive, persistently escaped from San Carlos. Finally at Apache Pass, the old scene of many an ambush, Geronimo — still uncaptured — voluntarily came in to offer to Gen. Nelson Miles his final surrender. September 5, 1886, national newspaper headlines jubilated "**APACHE WAR ENDED! GERONIMO CAPTURED!**"

Geronimo, Naiche and numerous other Apaches were rounded up, shackled and shipped by rail (the South Pacific RR was built 1882) to Florida far enough away that nevermore would Apache renegades terrorize the Southwest. Fort Pickens, an old Civil War Garrison by the sea, proved unhealthy for a desert people; tuberculosis took its toll. Alabama's Mt. Vernon Barracks in the pineys was scarcely better. Post surgeon Dr. Walter Reed contended with t.b. and meningitis afflicting these dusky cabin dwellers.

Finally in Oct. 1894, Fort Sill in Okla. became this band of Apaches' final home. That first winter they set up wickiups and began cattle raising. Summer they cultivated watermelons for themselves, and grew kafir corn and hay to sell to the Cavalry post which held them captive. Begging to go home, they built simple wooden houses to stay when denied that request. Geronimo's wives (he had married 9 in his life but was allowed only one at a time at the Fort) worked the fields, his children attended the Mission school, and he went into "show business". He made money at Expositions by selling $5.00 hawk feathers from his hat, 25¢ buttons cut from his coat, quivers and

arrows he fashioned, and many a dollar slipped to him by tourists who merely wanted to gawk at a really "wild" Indian. He himself admired the Fairs' magicians who sawed women in half only to revive them whole and blood free. Claiming magic powers himself, Geronimo was Big Medicine Man to his own people, not chief. He exercised this Power often — in fighting Gen'l Crooke's superior forces and weapons, in using his sixth sense in battle strategy, in healing. To his dying day, he believed no bullet ever fired could kill him.

Once he spent 4 days in the company of Pres. Roosevelt, begging to be freed so he could return to Ariz. with his people. The Great White Father said he was sorry, but he could not grant the request. Geronimo admitted to the Rough Rider that he had had "a bad heart", but now was changed for he had become a Christian.

Indeed Geronimo was baptized Christian at the Dutch Reformed Mission at Fort Sill. The War Department granted the Dutch Reformed denomination permission to build the mission on base for Sunday School and a common school. At a summer tent meeting conducted in the Apache village in 1902, Geronimo stood and declared that "the Jesus road was the best". The next year at the oak grove tent meeting, he requested baptism and joined the church, but was dismissed in a couple years for persistent gambling — his favorite pastime. Nor had he given up liquor and some Apache religious traditions, including supervising his daughter Eve's puberty ceremony. To the end Geronimo vacillated on Christianity — sometimes embracing it, other times renouncing it. The old way continued to hold him in its grasp till death.

One cold day in Feb. 1909, he rode his pony into Lawton for whiskey to warm his aging self. An accommodating soldier went into a saloon for a bottle and gave it to him — illegally. Drunk, Geronimo started for home in the dark, fell from his pony, and lay on the cold ground all night. Down with pneumonia, his women refused to allow the Army ambulance to take him to the Apache hospital on post — one they called "the death house". A post order forced him to the hospital anyway. On his death bed, Geronimo

continued to struggle with religion — pagan and Christian. He died still a prisoner of war.

He never realized his great hope of freedom, although he told the press, "Geronimo got religion now." Often he appealed to Roosevelt for freedom. He told one reporter, "Maybe so sometime President say: 'Go, good old Geronimo. You killed heap white folks, but Jesus man made you good. Be good man all time and war men hold you no more.'" Geronimo's alleged Power never seemed to work with the hero of San Juan Hill.

Geronimo left $10,000 in a Lawton bank (concrete evidence that he was at last "civilized"), and 2 children in the celebrated Carlisle, Pennsylvania Indian School to be educated to the white man's ways.

In 1912 Fort Sill needed the Apache village for a firing range to train artillery in the use of modern weaponry. The post offered the Apaches $300,000 to buy them out. But where could they go? Arizona refused them. Two missionaries led 183 of them to settle on New Mexico's Mescalero Reservation. Seventy-eight chose to stay in Oklahoma where the government bought them farms.

Today about 50,000 Apaches live quietly on 9 Reservations, one being the two million acre San Carlos in Arizona. These often struggle with unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide or diabetes. While some Apache ceremonies are still observed, those natives leaning toward Christianity prefer Catholicism or Pentecostalism. Urban Apaches appear more successful. Artists fashion clay pottery for marketing. But casinos offer greater economic promise for the Apaches.

I met one of the San Carlos Apaches a century after Geronimo's surrender at the annual American Indian Crusade (all nations) held at the YMCA in Estes Park. I signed up to attend the one week Christian Conference in the Colorado Rockies. Allen Early was the young man's name. A Protestant preacher, his ringing testimony of his former rowdy hooliganism at San Carlos and subsequent conversion to Christ by the grace of God was truly inspirational. He brought an armload of his autobiography to sell, from which a Christian movie was later made by the Billy Graham Crusade. Early's

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stirring pulpit messages were well received in the pews. What a difference a disappearing century, the right of franchise in 1924, the cross and a black leather bound Book had made in the repentant heart!

As for "Geronimo" his name today is remembered in the English language as a war cry. It is the paratrooper's jumping call as he bravely leaps from his plane over alien lands.

Bitter rancor for the Southwest terrorist, the Apache, is gone. It might not have ever happened were justice upheld from the beginning when the United States acquired the great Southwest in the Mexican War in 1848 and with it, a restive tribe of volatile aborigines with few buffalo to call their own.

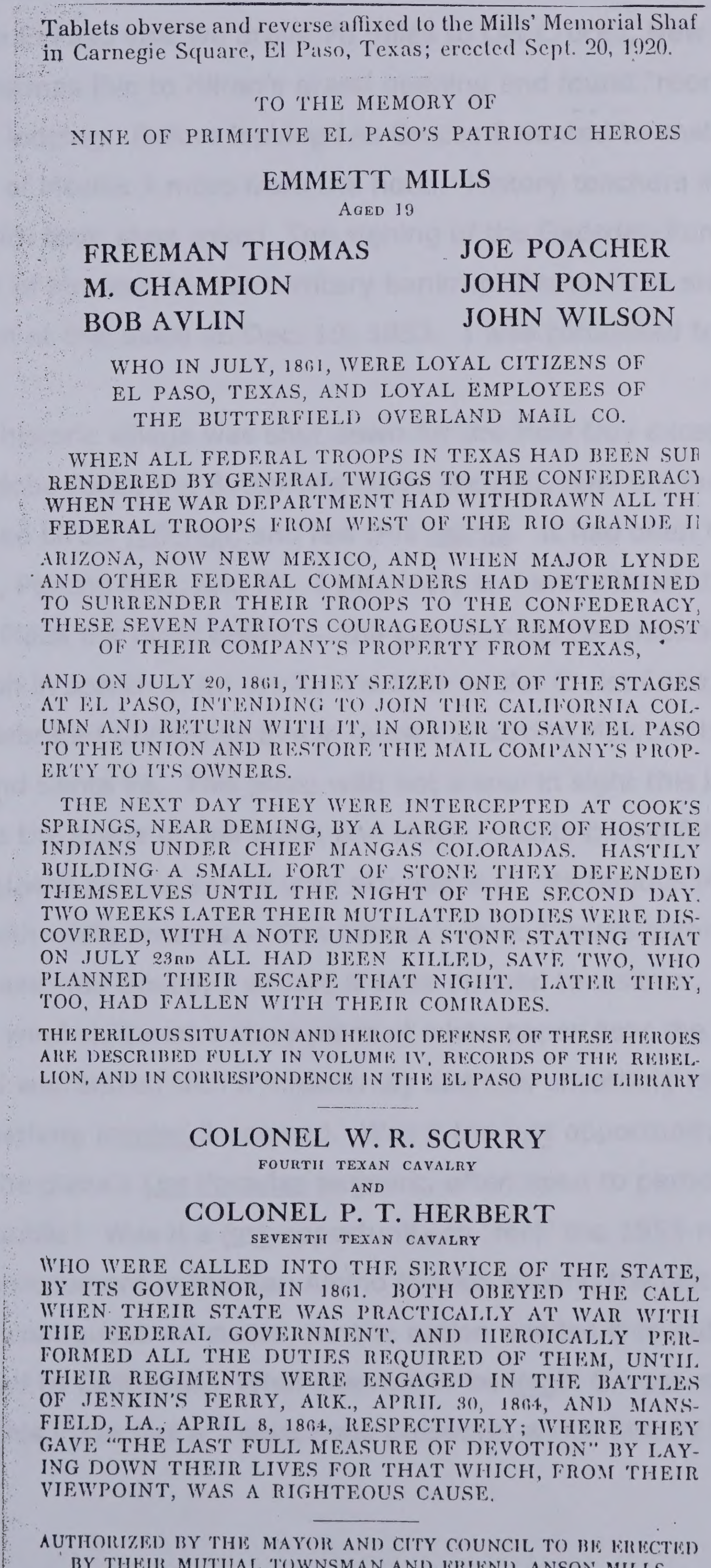
Conclusion

While I have never actually seen it for myself — only the photograph — there is today a monument dedicated to the 7 brave men of the Freeman Thomas Massacre on the lawn of the El Paso Public Library commissioned by Brigadier-General Anson Mills.

Anson served 4 years in the Civil War as First Lieutenant in the Army of the Cumberlands, engaged in battles at Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge. After that war ended, Anson continued his colorful military career. In the 1870's and 1880's Gen'l George Clark ordered him to meet Spotted Tail at the Brule Surrender; Gen'l Phil Sheridan ordered him to escort Lord Dunraven's British hunting party guided by Buffalo Bill on the treeless plains; in Nebraska his battalion was ordered to wage war with the Rosebud Sioux and Cheyenne. Sent to the Southwest to Fort Yuma, his troops were ordered to drive rebellious Apaches out of Arizona into Mexico. Then he was at Fort Sill when Geronimo and his people were shipped to Oklahoma; 33 years had passed since Geronimo's kin — Chiefs Mangas Coloradas and Cochise — had encountered his brother Emmett Mills and his 6 companions of the Freeman Thomas massacre in their 3 day last stand in Cooke's Canyon. Finally in 1889 Anson was assigned to Fort Bliss to take up duties where his Texas venture had begun in 1858 as a young surveyor and builder of El Paso.

The Mills Memorial Shaft was erected by Brigadier-General Anson Mills in El Paso's Carnegie Square in 1920. Although more recent historians

believe that certain details are in error on the marker, the reader of this narrative can read for himself the message Anson had engraved on the stone: —



Tablets obverse and reverse affixed to the Mills' Memorial Shaf in Carnegie Square, El Paso, Texas; erected Sept. 20, 1920.

TO THE MEMORY OF
NINE OF PRIMITIVE EL PASO'S PATRIOTIC HEROES

EMMETT MILLS
AGED 19

FREEMAN THOMAS
M. CHAMPION
BOB AVLIN
JOE POACHER
JOHN PONTEL
JOHN WILSON

WHO IN JULY, 1861, WERE LOYAL CITIZENS OF EL PASO, TEXAS, AND LOYAL EMPLOYEES OF THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL CO.

WHEN ALL FEDERAL TROOPS IN TEXAS HAD BEEN SURRENDERED BY GENERAL TWIGGS TO THE CONFEDERAC WHEN THE WAR DEPARTMENT HAD WITHDRAWN ALL TH FEDERAL TROOPS FROM WEST OF THE RIO GRANDE I ARIZONA, NOW NEW MEXICO, AND WHEN MAJOR LYNDE AND OTHER FEDERAL COMMANDERS HAD DETERMINED TO SURRENDER THEIR TROOPS TO THE CONFEDERACY, THESE SEVEN PATRIOTS COURAGEOUSLY REMOVED MOST OF THEIR COMPANY'S PROPERTY FROM TEXAS,

AND ON JULY 20, 1861, THEY SEIZED ONE OF THE STAGES AT EL PASO, INTENDING TO JOIN THE CALIFORNIA COLUMN AND RETURN WITH IT, IN ORDER TO SAVE EL PASO TO THE UNION AND RESTORE THE MAIL COMPANY'S PROPERTY TO ITS OWNERS.

THE NEXT DAY THEY WERE INTERCEPTED AT COOK'S SPRINGS, NEAR DEMING, BY A LARGE FORCE OF HOSTILE INDIANS UNDER CHIEF MANGAS COLORADAS. HASTILY BUILDING A SMALL FORT OF STONE THEY DEFENDED THEMSELVES UNTIL THE NIGHT OF THE SECOND DAY. TWO WEEKS LATER THEIR MUTILATED BODIES WERE DISCOVERED, WITH A NOTE UNDER A STONE STATING THAT ON JULY 23RD ALL HAD BEEN KILLED, SAVE TWO, WHO PLANNED THEIR ESCAPE THAT NIGHT. LATER THEY, TOO, HAD FALLEN WITH THEIR COMRADES.

THE PERILOUS SITUATION AND HEROIC DEFENSE OF THESE HEROES ARE DESCRIBED FULLY IN VOLUME IV, RECORDS OF THE REBELLION, AND IN CORRESPONDENCE IN THE EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY

COLONEL W. R. SCURRY
FOURTH TEXAN CAVALRY
AND
COLONEL P. T. HERBERT
SEVENTH TEXAN CAVALRY

WHO WERE CALLED INTO THE SERVICE OF THE STATE, BY ITS GOVERNOR, IN 1861. BOTH OBEYED THE CALL WHEN THEIR STATE WAS PRACTICALLY AT WAR WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND HEROICALLY PERFORMED ALL THE DUTIES REQUIRED OF THEM, UNTIL THEIR REGIMENTS WERE ENGAGED IN THE BATTLES OF JENKIN'S FERRY, ARK., APRIL 30, 1864, AND MANSFIELD, LA., APRIL 8, 1864, RESPECTIVELY; WHERE THEY GAVE "THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION" BY LAYING DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR THAT WHICH, FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT, WAS A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE.

AUTHORIZED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL TO BE ERECTED BY THEIR MUTUAL TOWNSMAN AND FRIEND, ANSON MILLS

Twice I had visited El Paso but knew nothing of the Mills Monument either time. On the second occasion in the 1980's before retiring from textbook and chalkboard, a friend and I went one Christmas break for respite to a warmer clime. After the El Paso visit we drove 70 miles to Las Cruces, New Mexico, arriving on Christmas Eve to Hilton's grand opening and found "room in the inn" for holiday lodging. Before leaving Las Cruces I wanted to snatch at least a glimpse of Mesilla 3 miles from the hotel. History teachers like to study history with their shoe soles! The signing of the Gadsden Purchase, a U.S. acquisition of Mexican border territory bankrupt Santa Anna sold for $10 million, occurred at this place on Dec. 10, 1853. I was compelled to set foot here.

The tiny historic village was shut down for the Holy Day except for a 3 centuries old adobe (once the Butterfield stage station), now the tacky café La Posta of caged birds, rellenos, and red chili ristras. It had been haunted by Billy the Kid, Pancho Villa, and ilk. I was sorry to have missed the pageant in the Plaza the night before — the Los Posadas re-enactment of Mary and Joseph in search of an inn for the birth of the Christ Child, as is traditionally celebrated Christmas Eve in locales of strong Mexican heritage as Mesilla, Taos and Santa Fe. This plaza with not a soul in sight this late afternoon, once the scene of bull fights and laden oxcarts bound for Santa Fe via Camino Real, was as cold as the gray sky above it. Its famous Mission of twin steeples with white crosses — San Albino — built 3 years before the Gadsden Purchase was closed; I wished it were opened to visitors. When the chill December wind skittered a stray piece of white paper near the gray Mission steps, I was seized with a melancholy sadness unsettling my holiday spirit — of something missed it seemed. Was it the lost opportunity of having joined the plaza's Los Posadas pageant, often open to participation to the observing public? Was it a lost opportunity to "feel" the 1853 ratification of the Gadsden document in the San Albino Mission sealing the last bit of territory of the contiguous 48 states, for the nation needed it to build a southern railroad to California? What seemed to be lost? Greggs early observed that this Plaza has a "mysterious presence, a rich history haunting

it, even today."

I had no notion whatever at that time that here in this village of Mesilla that my great-great grandmother Elizabeth Thomas Gillet's own brother Freeman Thomas, for whom she named her second born son "Freeman Z." — my very own Kansas great-grandfather whom I remember well, and a portion of whose farm I inherited and still own to this day, had once lived briefly in this historic place. He had sped by this very same San Albino 120 years earlier in a purloined stage wagon. He and his 6 Unionist companions — whatever the reason for the flight — fell into the bloody hands of avenging Apaches on the warpath led by Mangas Coloradas and Cochise lying in wait in Cooke's Canyon for just such trespassers on "their territory". Could there be some truth in the idea that there exists an "invisible mystical interconnectedness" with the departed, a notion I have hinted at throughout the telling of this family tragedy?

One minor mystery puzzling my childhood mind has been reasonably solved in researching this family chronicle. It concerned Homer's and Elizabeth's choice in an uncommon name for their second son born in Ohio — why Freeman Zaachary Gillet? The "Zaachary" part was easy. Scanning a history text I saw that Pres. Polk sent Zaachary Taylor ("Old Rough and Ready" who had warred in several wars — the War of 1812, the Black Hawk, and the Seminole) to guard the disputed boundary of Texas admitted to the Union as the 28th state, Dec., 1845. This military presence escalated into the Mexican War, wherein Gen'l Taylor defeated dictator Santa Anna in the Buena Vista battle. The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war, upon their ceding California and New Mexico to the U.S., and settling the disputed boundary of Texas at the Rio Grande; the date Feb. 2, 1848. Zaachary Taylor was hailed a great American hero! Nine days later Elizabeth Gillet held her newborn son. What to name him? Zaachary, of course. That same year the General was elected the 12th President of the U.S.

The given name "Freeman" has been more difficult to ascertain. We know our Freeman was named for his mother's brother, Freeman Thomas the subject of this chapter. But what of those much earlier Freemans I had

occasionally noted on family trees as I researched genealogy in general? Once again history held the key. Could the answer be a jubilee reference to a colonial indentured servant short of passage fare to the New World being "freed" after paying off his debt to his creditor whose pockets were deeper? Then, a more plausible solution came to mind as I delved further into colonial history. The Puritans used standard British titles of rank, such as "Mister" held only by landed gentry; the peasant farmer made do with "yeoman" or "Good man" and his wife was "Goody", not Mrs. When a man in the Bay Colony qualified for admission to the political process as citizen, he became "free man".

Thus we see our British progenitor Jonathan[1] Gillet, son of Rev. William Gillet, Rector of Chaffecombe Parish, Somersetshire, England, arrived in America in 1630 with the first shipload of Puritans, a bachelor with little standing aboard the Mary and John. Winthrop's flag ship of his celebrated Fleet missing its intended destination dropped anchor in the right place a few days later. Boston, the city on the hill, was about to be born.

In a couple of years our Jonathan quit the colony to sail back to Somerset for a bride, Mary Dolbiar; they returned to American in 1634. The following year on May 6, Jonathan was admitted to the Bay Colony as "freeman." Now a full fledged member of the church with full rights of citizen, he was eligible to take on the serious business of citizenship — casting the vote, sitting in Court, performing his assigned duty of constable of his hamlet when his turn came for that often onerous duty in the strictly managed Blue Law society.

Had this highly sought after entitlement "freeman" found its way to the baby's cradle? Puritans, who literally lived the Old Testament, avoided the use of Christian names as Mary and Joanna, Paul and Timothy. They preferred Abijah, Ebenezer, Hosea, Israel, Jonah, Noah, Obadiah and Zilpah, — all O.T. names found in our own family records. Also found in our records are the personal "experience" names, such as Captivity (b. 1678 while her mother Hannah was held captive by Indians), Delight, Mindwell and Thankful. The Boston divine Cotton Mather had a son named "Seaborn", because he

was actually born in a ship on the briny deep. In our Cornell family tree we had a posthumously born "Innocent", so named by a loyal mother a few weeks after the baby's father's execution in 17th C. Rhode Island for the murder of his mother Rebecca, our Quaker progenitor.

Freeman^8 Zaachary, son of Homer^7 Gillet (Amasa^6, Joseph^5 the American Revolution soldier, Benjamin^3, John^2, Jonathan^1, our progenitor from England), and of Elizabeth^5 THOMAS (Morgan N.^{4}, William^3,William^2, Elder William^1, Welsh preacher), died Dec. 12, 1933 on his little Coffey Co., Ks. farm, age 85. He had married on Oct. 16, 1870, Emma Tipton (she died Jan 21, 1932), daughter of Rhodes Tipton, a Kansas Territory settler from 1854, a Jayhawker along the Missouri border who engaged in the "Bleeding Kansas" Bushwhacker guerrilla war waged for 6 1/2 years between Ks. and Mo. before the Great Civil War of the U.S. was declared by Lincoln in 1861 — also over the issue of slavery. Freeman and Emma had 7 children, the oldest being my farmer Grandfather Wilson^9 Gillet (1872-1942).

The stories of these Gillet pioneers have been told in detail in other family chronicles I have researched and written over a period of 30 years.